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A HANDBOOK OF PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES

THE MODEL SUNDAY-SCHOOL

GEO. M. BOYNTON

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BY

GEORGE M. BOYNTON

Secretary of the
Congregational Sunday-School and Publishing Society

BOSTON AND CHICAGO
Congregational Sunday-School and Publishing Society

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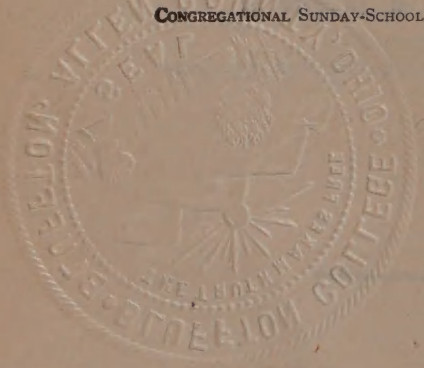

INTRODUCTION

THE aim of this book, which was suggested at the close of a long conference between the Secretary and the Missionary Superintendents of the Congregational Sunday-School and Publishing Society, is altogether practical. It has in mind, first of all, the hundreds who are called upon each year to superintend and to teach, who have had no experience in the work and little opportunity for observation. Many of these are in the newer places where this is the first Christian work attempted and where there are no surrounding supports from sympathizing pastors or warm-hearted Christians. Others are in the older and larger places suddenly called to new positions of responsibility, and where they long for advice which may not be at hand just when they want it.

The Sunday-school Conventions or Institutes cover this same ground, or parts of it, whenever they meet, but they meet only occasionally and can reach but a small fraction of those who need most the help they bring. This little book may aid in supplying the information and advice which come from such gatherings of earnest Christian workers. Of course it cannot arouse the enthusiasm which comes from personal contact with those who are both wise and zealous and who shed both warmth and light. And yet these pages have not been prepared without earnest sympathy with those who are trying to do what they can in this important department, nor without a constant prayer that it may help to the great end for which alone the Sunday-school has a right to be.

G. M. B.

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THE MODEL SUNDAY-SCHOOL

CHAPTER I.

Origin and Progress of the Sunday-school.

I. IN ITS ORGANIZATION.

THERE can be no doubt that the elements essential to the Sunday-school are all to be found **in the Old Testament Scriptures,** that is, there were schools, or classes, therein referred to for the study of the Scriptures. Of course they did not meet, except incidentally, on the first day of the week, and probably not on the Jewish Sabbath. From Abraham to Ezra there are distinct traces of this kind of teaching as the family church broadens into the national church. Gen. 18 : 19; Deut. 6 : 6–9; Neh. 8 : 8.

It is clear that, **in the first centuries of the Christian Church,** there were classes for catechumens, that is, for the systematic instruction of those who were preparing for full admission to the Church, and that these classes were largely composed of children and youth.

It is equally evident that with **every period of the revival of spiritual life** in the Church there has been a revival of interest in this department. Luther, Calvin, and Knox each insisted on these training schools for the young, and the first two prepared catechisms for their use. The

Roman Catholic leaders — Loyola, Xavier, and Borromeo — employed similar means to stay the rising tide of Protestantism.

During the seventeenth century only here and there do we come upon the traces of such organizations. In England there seem to be but one or two claimants to this honor. In New England, Roxbury, Mass., in 1674, Norwich, Conn., in 1676, and the original Church of the Pilgrims at Plymouth, Mass., in 1680, show this honorable record.

The earliest Sunday-school of which any authentic account remains was established at Ephratah, Penn., by Ludwig Häcker, in 1740, and continued until its building was taken for military uses during the war of the Revolution.

It was in July, 1780, in Gloucester, England, that **Robert Raikes** opened a Sunday-school, in the house of a Mrs. King, for the neglected children of that neighborhood. It is claimed that, in answer to a question, this form of help for them was suggested to him by Miss Bradburn, a Methodist lady of that city. Mr. Raikes was himself a member of the Church of England. The original suggestion seems to have been followed that they be taught to read and taken to church. Three other women, besides the Mrs. King at whose house they met, were engaged to teach, and paid a shilling each Sunday.

But **why** does our modern system of Sunday-school organization and instruction **date back to this** rather than to other beginnings? Mainly because this special work became known through The Gloucester Journal, of which Mr. Raikes was the editor and proprietor, though he did not publish the methods of his work until he had carried it on successfully for three years. The article which then appeared attracted attention, induced inquiries, and was republished variously.

Though opposed by some of its highest dignitaries, his work received the approbation of several of the bishops of his own

church. John Wesley caught at the idea and urged it vigorously upon the Methodist churches.

Its rapid growth is evidenced by the fact that within four years after the public announcement of this work in Gloucester the Sunday-schools of Great Britain included more than 250,000 members — among all denominations of Christians.

There are **now estimated** to be about 20,000,000 members enrolled in the Sunday-schools of the world, about one half of these being in our own land.

II. IN ITS SYSTEMS OF STUDY.

The first of the modern Sunday-schools were devoted mainly to **teaching** otherwise neglected children **to read** and to repeat the catechism of the English Church. Our Chinese schools to-day begin where Robert Raikes did, with the English alphabet.

The next period seems to have been especially devoted to **memorizing the words of the Bible.** Important as this is in its place, it by no means is a substitute for understanding its truths. It was overdone in its time both in the day and Sunday-schools, to the mental and physical injury of many children. It is unfortunate that so little of it is attempted or accomplished now.

Catechism study with proof texts has had its day also in the Sunday-school. A good catechism may be of great value — one which states biblical truths in exact and intelligible form, one which confines itself to the things which are revealed, one which makes not merely a line but a broad chasm between the truths which the Holy Spirit has taught and the inferences which men have drawn from them. Such catechisms are very rare. The great historic catechisms are

not of this sort. Nor were catechisms ever designed to be merely committed to the memory without also being commended to the mind.

Proof texts are of value also if rightly used; but not as they have been handled, even in recent controversies. It is a sacrilegious and degrading use of holy words to use detached sentences because they sound like proofs, without regard to their real meaning or their connection as they were originally spoken or written. The verse study of Scripture is out of date, at least in the Sunday-school.

We are in the day of the **paragraph study of the Bible.** This is a great advance on all that has preceded it, especially as it is laid out in the **uniform lesson system.** This had its origin in a general desire to which the International Sunday-school Convention, held at Indianapolis in 1872, gave expression and form. Since that time the committees appointed at this and succeeding conventions have selected the lessons and Golden Texts. They have been in use by schools aggregating probably 8,000,000 in membership. Their plan has been to lead the schools in seven years, and later in six years, through the main parts of Bible history and doctrine; selecting as lessons those paragraphs containing its more important events and teachings. They have not been able to do more than this. They have been obliged to leave the general drill on Bible books, history, and geography, and a systematic study of doctrines and duties to superintendents, teachers, pastors, and normal classes. That a great stimulus has been given to the study of the Word of God by this movement there can be no question. That it has been adopted by the leading denominations of Christians on both sides of the ocean is a tribute to the general satisfactoriness of the scheme. That it has aroused a sense of further need, of deeper and more general knowledge of the Bible, is one of the

best tributes to its value. When that superior system is prepared which will reach more surely than this can the aim and purpose of the Sunday-school, it will either take the place of the uniform lesson or take a place by its side. What it will be the future alone will show.

All this has led up to a **book study of the Bible**: to the inquiry in each case not mainly as to who wrote the book, but from what standpoint, at what time, to whom, and for what purpose, it was written. No other line of study can lead to such rich, corrected, and suggestive views of the meaning of special paragraphs and texts as this. Indeed we do not doubt that it is the best method of study or the best atmosphere in which to study. It is better than harmonistic or strictly historical study. These give a good setting for the picture or a good catalogue of the gallery. But as the Bible is a collection of books and each was written separately and in the main without reference to any other, they can be better studied in this way.

The Gospels give us each a special view of the Lord Jesus Christ. Is it not well to look long and lovingly at these photographs, rather than to try to make a better picture of the Master by a modern process of composite photography? Can we study the sacred library better than as it was given to us through its books?

III. IN ITS RELATION TO THE CHURCH.

The modern Sunday-school was in its origin outside the Church, its object to make up somewhat for the lack of other training; its tendency of course was toward the Church.

As it came to be more and more a school for Bible teaching, the Church and its authorities assumed in general **a hostile attitude.** Here and there were marked exceptions to this

rule. The authorized and official teachers of the Church feared the effect of this unauthorized and unofficial teaching. This was true both in England and in this country. Then came **a time when it was tolerated,** though not much more than tolerated, in the Church: when many pastors looked upon it with suspicion and granted it a place with apprehension. Still it had taken too strong a hold of the mass of the people to be refused. Godly men and women saw the opportunity to do good and many parents desired it for their children. The need was of course most evident where there was no such desire.

The chasm which was allowed to grow up between them is due, we think, to this opposition and reluctance on the part of the Church to receive the Sunday-school as one of its own agencies. If the school had been born within the Church and of it; if from the first it had been recognized and treated as its own, there could not have been that amount of separateness which exists even to-day between them. It would have been a child of the house. The pastor would have held his right relation to it. The Church would have sustained and controlled it. But as it forced itself upon the Church, and was compelled to make its claim good to recognition, its adoption has not yet been made *complete* in all bodies of Christian people.

Now the Sunday-school is **recognized and adopted** as an effective agency of the Church both for the education of its own wards and for the extension of its influence to those without. All intelligent Christian churches value and use it in their work, not as a substitute for parental or pastoral instruction, but as a supplement to them; not to take the place of other Home Missionary agencies, but to take its place with them as a forerunner, an explorer, a tester of new fields. In both these relations its proper work is set forth in other chapters.

IV. IN ITS ORGANIZATION FOR EVANGELISTIC WORK.

The Sunday-school first for those without. The Sunday-school in its modern life began, not for the Christian education of the children of the Church, but altogether with reference to those who were growing up outside of its influence. In England, indeed, it has continued to work far more on this line than in our own land. Since its adoption by the Church it has been gradually organizing to renew this work for those without.

Origin of Sunday-school unions. The earliest of these organizations was not the outgrowth of any denomination, but as the work was largely done, not by the churches as a whole, but by individual members of them, these persons from various denominations formed *unions* for its prosecution. The two departments of their effort were to furnish books, both to guide in Bible study and for libraries of religious reading; and to send out missionaries to organize schools in new or religiously neglected places.

English organizations. A "Sunday-school Society" was organized in London in 1785, under which paid teachers were employed. When volunteers were substituted for these the London Sunday-school Union was organized, in 1803. This is a union of Sunday-schools, and not of coöperating individuals as in our country.

American organizations. Sunday-school Unions were organized in New York and Boston in 1816, and in Philadelphia in 1817. These were for local work.

The American Sunday-school Union followed in 1824, for both the purposes already named. In October of the same year the Massachusetts Sabbath-school Union was formed in Boston, including delegates from Congregational, Baptist, Episcopal, and Methodist Sunday-schools. Only the first two

of these denominations were interested or active members of the Union, and they were soon left alone by the withdrawal of the other two. In 1832 it was thought best to separate amicably with a fair distribution of the property. **The Congregational Sunday-School and Publishing Society** is the legal and spiritual successor of its part of this work. This same work is also vigorously prosecuted by the other denominations, the American Sunday-school Union also keeping up a large and important work.

Union in sentiment and separation for work. The last fifty years are witnesses to two important facts in the history of the American churches. The first is that they have been growing towards each other in their sympathies, in their kindly feelings, in their sense of oneness. The second is that they have been withdrawing from each other for the prosecution of their aggressive religious work. These two movements are by no means contradictory. There is less friction and more freedom in the working together of those who are wholly at one. There is a greater feeling and assumption of responsibility in the division of the work. What is yet needed is that this sense of oneness shall grow until it leads to a practical **denominational comity,** which will respect the claims of previous occupancy ; and which, on the other hand, will cheerfully give up a field which cannot be efficiently occupied. The prayer of Christ for the oneness of his disciples cannot be even measurably answered until as much as this is recognized in principle and secured in practice.

Advantages of denominational work. Meanwhile, the Union Sunday-school missionary work has its place, especially in those sections where there are many church organizations but no Sunday-schools, or where, from the conditions, no church organizations can be formed. In other regions the advantages of denominational work are evident and proved by experience. They are : —

The fostering care that is behind the newly formed school, a family into which it may be adopted, and which can care for it until it has become a church; the avoidance of the denominational question which is so apt to be divisive when the question of a church arises, but which is so easily settled at the start; the connection early made with some church or pastor who agrees occasionally to visit the school, to preach to the people, and to have a general oversight of the work. These practical results of greater permanence and peace commend the denominational work to all who are familiar with it.

Methods of Sunday-school missionary work. Its methods are simple. On the basis of all attainable information in regard to the place to be visited, its school population, ascertained often from the official records of the county or state, it usually begins with a house-to-house **canvass.** In this, while the main inquiry is in regard to the children, other facts which concern the religious condition of the family are brought to light. A meeting is appointed, at which the question of a Sunday-school **organization** is discussed. A vote is taken; officers are elected; helps are given in whole or in part; the school is launched. A preaching service follows of an earnest, evangelistic nature; the few scattered Christians in the place, if there are any such, are brought to each other's knowledge, and the responsibility for the new Christian enterprise is thrown on them.

The continued oversight of some church or pastor within reaching distance is secured if possible, he agreeing to visit this field at stated or irregular intervals. Correspondence is kept up with them, as far as possible, by the superintendent who has organized them. If the school dies or is suspended, the place is revisited, and it is reorganized; and this constant supervision is maintained until at length a church is called for, when, under the proper auspices, either the Home Missionary

Superintendent or a council of neighboring churches, a church is fully organized, of which the Sunday-school out of which it has grown remains an important part.

Instruction in administration and teaching. The next work of the Sunday-school missionary is to do all he can to make this a good school; to advise its superintendent as to methods of administration, and its teachers as to the best ways of teaching. To this end institutes are often held, if possible, of groups of neighboring schools, in which they may receive such instruction. Evangelistic services are held, where there is no church, or where the center of this work is the school.

Aid, and its limits. Aid is continued in the supply of lesson helps and other material to keep up the interest of the school, it being encouraged to assume self-support as rapidly as it may be able. In fact, everything is done which can be to foster the religious life of the community, and to make the work begun both organically permanent and spiritually fruitful.

With the variations implied in the conditions, this is the general working plan in city and in country — a canvass, an organization, pastoral oversight, instruction and advice, and aid diminishing until self-support is possible and actual.

CHAPTER II.

The Sunday-school Defined: its Aim and its Orders.

I. THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL DEFINED.

What is the Sunday-school? It is an organization which meets regularly on the Lord's Day for the social study of God's Word.

It is on **the Lord's Day** because (1) there is leisure on that day for such a gathering; (2) because the study of the Bible is an appropriate use of holy time.

It studies **God's Word** because the truth contained therein is able to make us wise unto salvation; to fit us to live wisely here and to save us from sin and death.

Its teaching is distinguished from that of the pulpit in that it is by question and answer; that it is conversational rather than oratorical; that it is flexible as directed to topics which may prove to be of special value by the interest excited; and that it is guided by the text of the Scripture rather than by selected topics.

Its main work is teaching: on this it is to depend for the accomplishment of its purpose. Its leading work is not exhortation: that belongs rather to the more general service or to private conversation. Exhortation soon wears out and loses its power by too frequent repetition. The Sunday-school is not chiefly for the personal application of the lesson to the class or to the individual pupils. Its work is the study of the Bible as a whole and in its parts, its history, its doctrines, and

its duties. The Bible well taught may be trusted largely to make its own impression and application.

It is **not a substitute for the** religious instruction of the **home.** God has said to every father and mother, "Take this child and nurse it for me and I will give thee thy wages." No individual or institution can relieve the parent of this responsibility and privilege. The Sunday-school may, however, help the parent in this work.

It is not a substitute for the **other services** of **the church.** It differs from them in its methods and means, while it works to the same end. It is incomplete without them, as they are without it. It may and ought to help them all.

II. ITS AIM

is to lead all who are engaged in it to an intelligent *Christian faith and life.* Nothing less than this would be a sufficient reason for giving to it a part of the Lord's Day. Nothing less than this consists with the purpose for which the Bible was given to and has been preserved in the world. What is its aim?

(1) **Not mere entertainment.** That is the lowest possible thought that can be connected with this work. To make the hour pass pleasantly is as insufficient a motive as to make the teacher or superintendent popular is an unworthy one. While both of these are important and desirable to be attained, in the Sunday-school as in the public worship of the church, it is merely as aids to the only worthy purpose for which the school or public worship is held.

(2) It is by no means **a mere knowledge of the Bible** either in its general character, its history, the relation of its different parts, or even an intellectual apprehension of its doctrines or the character of the Divine Man who is its central and commanding figure. The Bible was given for a

purpose and it is that which has been named as the object of its study. It is not a mere history, though it is that; but it is the history of the revelation of God to us that he might be the object of our faith and love and obedience. Mere knowledge has no saving power. It must stir the heart and move the will or it only adds a burden of responsibility and an emphasis of condemnation.

(3) It is **not simply conversion** which should be its aim: but more than that. Conversion is only the beginning or rather the preliminary to a Christian life. It is the turning from sin to serve the living and true God. The life and the service are beyond it. It is the vessel casting off from the dock where it has been lying; but the voyage is before it, the use of chart, compass, and rudder must be mastered, with a daily taking of the sun besides.

III. WHOM SHOULD IT INCLUDE?

All who desire or are willing to study and learn more of God's Word. This naturally includes all the children and youth. They are learning in all departments, and ought to desire and certainly need to be instructed in the Bible. It should include all who have not enjoyed or improved these advantages in their childhood and youth, and who therefore need to make up for that deficiency. It should include all who are not sure that they know all that it is important or possible for them to know of the Book which contains the revelation of our heavenly Father's character and will and purposes for us.

Not only the pupils should be in the Sunday-school for this purpose, but the officers and teachers as well. They too are there not only to teach but to learn. And there is no incentive to learn like learning to teach. There is no study which is so fruitful as that which is done with this motive.

It should include parents who have a motive in addition to their own needs in their preparation to minister to the needs of their children and to aid them in their study of the Bible.

It should certainly not omit the earnest pastor who will wish to be in the study with the rest for his own sake and that he may help to guide the study of all in the best direction.

Who are left out then? None who are able to and can be persuaded to come, or to join the study at home.

IV. VARIOUS ORDERS OF SUNDAY-SCHOOLS.

There are several kinds of schools, some of which are more complete than others. Some are permanent and some temporary in their forms.

1. **The Church Sunday-school.** This is the ideal school. Where there is an organized Christian church, this is the only form in which it ought to exist. The school is one of the forms of organized activity of the local church. This will be the idea in mind in the general counsels which occupy this book. The modifications necessary to apply them to the temporary forms of its existence will be generally obvious, and only occasionally expressed.

2. **The mission or branch school.** This is naturally the outreaching of the church to those who are too far away to attend the church school. It ought not to be a reaching down to a different class of those poorer in wealth or intelligence and who are therefore separated from the families who make up the home congregation. They ought to be welcomed to all that the church provides for its own, even if it must provide a little less for them in some regards. The church is all a mission, not a club, and it will best provide for its own by imbuing them all with the spirit of the Master. But there

are those too far away to come; to them it goes with the same advantages it offers to its own.

The distinction stated. The mission school may be more or less connected with the church. If the church assumes to supply a place for its sessions, money for its expenses, and teachers and officers for its work, it is essentially a part of the church — a branch.

If it is taken care of in these regards by individual members of the church, then it is a mission, or independent school, having only the moral support of the church and its pastor. The closer it can be tied to the home church the better, during the period of its dependency; but the sooner it can be supplemented with other services of public worship, preaching, and prayer-meetings, the better; and the sooner it can be graduated as a fully organized and independent church the best of all. Then, what was the branch or mission school will have become a church school in the full and ideal sense.

3. **The pioneer school.** In the newer parts of the country where religious institutions have not been organized, and in the newer parts of growing cities, the easiest way to begin Christian effort is with the Sunday-school. A simple organization may be effected, a superintendent and teachers selected as carefully as possible, and the aid, as may be absolutely necessary, given. To insure the permanence of such beginnings is more difficult than to begin them. A patient oversight is necessary. The best way is to place the school in relation to some particular branch of the Church of Christ, so that it shall be cared for, and above all so that it shall be developed in time into a church fully organized. It is important to hold the ground, but it is not sufficient in itself.

4. **The union school: where needed.** The place for this is where nothing else will grow; where the people refuse

to gather under the name or care of any organized denomination; where there are temporary populations and no church can be planted and prosper. Here the people may unite to study the Bible and to pray and praise and to hear such preaching as they can secure.

Why seldom needed. There are few new communities, however, where it is not possible to organize a Sunday-school under the care of a particular branch of the Church, provided it is one which has no prominent and divisive peculiarities, and that the work is begun in a kindly and Christian spirit: and where if this body commends itself by its liberality and catholicity, there will not probably grow up a church of the corresponding order. It is an easy matter, and is often done, to turn such a school over to the care of another denomination if it shall be able to come to church organization first. "The best union school is a denominational school" has been often said by those at the front.

What it lacks. The difficulties of the union school are the lack of responsible supervision, the lack of connection with any organized church, the division which arises often with the question of organizing a church, and the fact that a much larger proportion of such schools fail to result in churches than of those planted and cared for by a denomination.

When injurious. A union school which hinders the organization of a church is an injury. A school which insists on remaining union after the organization of a church is an injury and limits the usefulness of the church and its minister.

There is no reason for the existence of a union Sunday-school which does not apply to a union church, and that we know usually means only a new denomination.

The church school, the ideal. Let everything move, then, toward the church school. The branch is really part of the vine, the Church. The mission ought to be grafted on as

quickly as may be practicable. The independent and the pioneer and union schools should either come under the care of some neighboring church and pastor, or be developed into churches, meanwhile, as a temporary expedient, having the care of a general missionary of some organized denomination.

CHAPTER III.

The Sunday-school and the Home.

Parents the first teachers. The home is the earliest and the divinest of all institutions. Every child is put into the care of a father and a mother, or is intended to be, and the divine plan is that by them as models and as teachers of all that is good, the child shall grow up into the likeness of Jesus Christ. When the home and the church are working together toward this end there is great hope of its accomplishment. But the church has the child in its training-school for only one hour a week; the secular school has it for twenty-five hours, and the home all the remainder of the time. If the church through the pastor, the superintendent, the teacher, all combined, can secure the hearty, open, evident coöperation of the home, the strongest ally is gained.

I. HOW THE HOME CAN HELP THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL.

(1) By securing prompt and regular attendance. If the parents are in the school themselves, it is best accomplished by saying, "Come," in addition to their own promptness and regularity. If they are not attendants, it can be accomplished by seeing that the children, and even the young folks, are ready in ample time, and then by saying, "Go." Get this into the minds of the parents as important, and it will be done.

(2) **By securing good will toward teachers.** By helping the children to regard their teachers with respect and good will. If parents criticize pastors or teachers before their young people, they invite them to do the same. The way in which teachers are greeted by their pupils is almost a sure indication of the way in which they are spoken of in the home. It is too bad by careless criticism to undermine the influence of those who are seeking the children's good. If their faults are serious, the children should be taken away from their care. If not, these should never once be named.

(3) **By aiding the children, and stimulating them in the study of the lesson.** If the father and mother never speak of the Bible studies of their children, it is to be assumed that they do not think them of much consequence. If these are kept in mind, some questions asked now and then about them, reference made to them occasionally at family prayers and at other times, the inference is that they are regarded as of importance. There are endless ways by which to make this impression; the main thing is for the parents to have this feeling. In some households a verse or two is studied every day; in others, the daily Bible readings used are those in connection with the lessons; in many the lesson is gone over with the younger children at least before they go to the class; or the Golden Texts or memory verses are recited at home, and it is seen that they are thoroughly learned. In any or all of these ways the parents can show their interest in the Sunday-school work, and can secure what it is almost impossible for the teacher to do without their aid, the study of the lesson at home.

(4) **By encouraging the teachers** and aiding those who are trying to help the children of the home. Superintendents and teachers need this help. To know that parents at home are praying for them in their work; to be assured of

their coöperation in all the ways that have been named; to receive an occasional word of sympathy and gratitude for their unpaid labors, — this puts heart into them when discouraged, and prevents them from becoming weary in their welldoing. Let parents do or say something now and then to show their appreciation and to prove their coöperation. The best way is to attend and help; if that is impossible, the next best thing is to go occasionally, and at least say, Thank you and God bless you!

If anything special is proposed against which the parent has no conscientious objection, let him heartily coöperate through the children. Is it a special or a regular missionary collection? See that you do your part through your children. Is it a thanksgiving bag to fill for some poor family or institution? Help your children to fill it full and to carry it, proud that it is so heavy, to add to the common stock. Is it for some need of the school to be supplied by common effort? Help in the same way all you can. Don't be forever holding back from the common movement of the school; pull rather, even if you think something else would be better.

(5) **By having the same aim for which the Sunday-school exists:** that is, the development of an intelligent Christian faith and life. That is the highest function of the home which is the only true aim of the church. There was a time when church and family were one, and Abraham was called "to the end that he may command his children and his household after him, that they may keep the way of the Lord" (Gen. 18 : 19). It was thus that all the families of the earth should be blessed in him. When the first desire of the parents' hearts for their children and households is that each may come into the Christly life, the work of the Sunday-school will be easy and its greatest present hindrance will be taken out of the way.

II. HOW TO SECURE THE CO-OPERATION OF THE HOME.

This is not always ready. All the homes from which scholars come are not Christian homes. Parents are often indifferent and more often unqualified to give much aid. But the wise superintendent and teacher can awaken interest and give wise direction to it.

We can give only a few hints. Take the parents into your confidence. Tell them what you are trying to do for their children. Talk to them freely of the good qualities you recognize in your scholars, and hint gently at the difficulties you find in securing their attendance or attention. Suggest some simple ways in which they may be aided at home. Show your own real interest in them, and theirs will follow and respond to yours. Enter into sympathy with them and their home life with simple friendliness, and when they trust you as a friend they will try to help you as a teacher.

III. HOW THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL MAY HELP THE HOME.

(1) **As a stimulus** to parental faithfulness. What Christian parent can bear to see another more interested in his own child's religious life and training than he is himself?

(2) **By wise counsel** and advice. Often the teacher may be called upon for these by inexperienced parents or those just waking to the higher responsibilities of their position.

(3) **By teaching** the children their **duties to parents** and home as laid down in the Bible and illustrated in the early life of Jesus.

(4) **By binding the godless home to the church** through kindness and faithfulness and patience.

(5) **By leading the children and youth into the kingdom,** and so bringing the kingdom near to the home.

Relation of the Sunday-school to Home Training. It has been made as an objection to the working of the Sunday-school that it is too often allowed to take the place of family religious training. We doubt the fact, except perhaps **in irreligious homes,** where if there were nothing else the parents might feel compelled to give the children some formal teaching in committing to memory the commandments or the catechism. The excuse might be made in such cases that their children receive all needed Christian teaching in the Sunday-school. Who will question that in these cases the substitute is better than that which it displaces? The loving, interested instruction of a Christian teacher is far better than the mere rote teaching of an indifferent parent.

In truly Christian homes the Sunday-school doubtless changes the character of the home teaching. It is not necessary for the parent to spend as much time as otherwise over the same things that are taught in the school. But this only leaves the way open for a deeper and a wider range of teaching, either in giving that general knowledge of the Bible which is so much needed, or in leading into its more spiritual lessons. There is a wide enough range which is not covered by the Sunday-school instruction for all the time and thought which most Christian parents can command.

Then, too, **as to the fact.** It is no more true than "that the public school system hinders home instruction." Rev. Henry Clay Trumbull, in his Yale Lectures (p. 151), asserts as the result of his careful study that "all history gives evidence that just in proportion as the church school in earlier or later times has flourished or has declined, family religion has waxed or has waned," and from his wide observation testifies: "In-

variably I have found that the measure and standard of family religion corresponded with the measure and standard of Sunday-school activities in each and every community." [1]

The fact is, the Sunday-school stimulates, guides, and supplements the training of the home and connects its life with that of the church.

The Home Department offers efficient aid in the direction of keeping the Sunday-school and the home together in work and influence. (See the section which treats of that Department.)

[1] **Yale Lectures on the Sunday-school, Trumbull, p. 173.**

CHAPTER IV.

The Sunday-school and the Church.

A better title. It would be better to say, "the Sunday-school in the Church," but the words would be misunderstood. The topic should not be stated, "The relation of the Sunday-school to the church"; that implies that they are two and not one. The Sunday-school is the church, and those in it are under its care engaged in the study of God's Word. Of course what will be said applies mainly to a Sunday-school which is or can be connected with a particular church. They are or should be as much one as the church and the prayer-meeting, or the church and the church committee.

I. WHAT THE CHURCH SHOULD DO FOR THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL.

The fundamental principle is that the church should in every respect regard and treat the school as an essential part of itself, for it is that part of it in which the Bible is studied and taught in a social way.

1. **The church should control the Sunday-school.** It so controls the committee and the prayer-meeting.

It should *organize* the school; for the school must of necessity have an organization. It must have officers and meetings and appliances for its peculiar service. There are good and bad ways in which this may be done. It would not be helpful for the church to vote on and decide all the smaller matters of

the school's management. The best connection is in the appointment of the superintendent, as that officer to whom the church entrusts the administration of the school. The teachers with the pastor and the voting members of the school may wisely be consulted on the ground of their especial interest and their more intimate knowledge. These teachers will usually be the faithful members of the church who attend its social and business meetings, and do the voting there. Let them nominate to the church, but let the church as such elect the head of the school.

But, **let the church elect the superintendent,** not merely as an officer of the school, but of the church. Make him *ex officio* a member of the church committee, one of the pastor's staff officers. Thus he can easily consult with the committee in regard to the needs and interests of the school, can help to unify its concerns with those of the church, and can be one of those to whom its members make application for admission to church membership. Then he will make report of his stewardship at the annual meeting of the church, not as a matter of courtesy, but as an officer making his return to those from whom he received his trust.

2. **The church should support the Sunday-school.** A common purse is the symbol of a common interest. It is a contradiction for the church to claim the school as part of itself, and compel or call on it to support itself.

(*a*) It **should supply the place for the school;** the best place it can. It may only be able to offer the room in which its services of public worship are held. If that is the best it can afford, it may be made to answer the purpose. There are thousands of one-room cabins in the land where a whole family lives. It is not well, if more rooms can be had; but you cannot blame the parents who share the best they can afford with their children. The advantage of separate rooms may, to some

extent, be gained by **the simple expedient of screens,** cheaply framed of wood and covered with cloth on both sides, and hooked on to screw-eyes attached to seats and walls where they may be needed. This will separate as far as the eyes are concerned, and help somewhat in limiting the reach of the voice. Thousands of Sunday-schools, however, have done excellent study and come to grand spiritual results without even as much as this.

It may be the prayer-meeting room. That will do if it is large enough to contain the school; only, in either case, the room should be adapted for the teaching service, as well as for the preaching or the praying service. For all uses, it should be adapted to the **three great needs** of the eye, the ear, and the lungs. It should be possible in it to see, to hear, and to breathe. Too many rooms only afford a place to sit, and that at great disadvantage. A room for the Sunday-school service should be light enough to read anywhere within its walls on a fair day, and it should have some other means of ventilation than the windows if possible. One or two flues heated with a coil of steam pipe, a gas jet, or a lamp, will greatly relieve the close and foul air in almost any room.

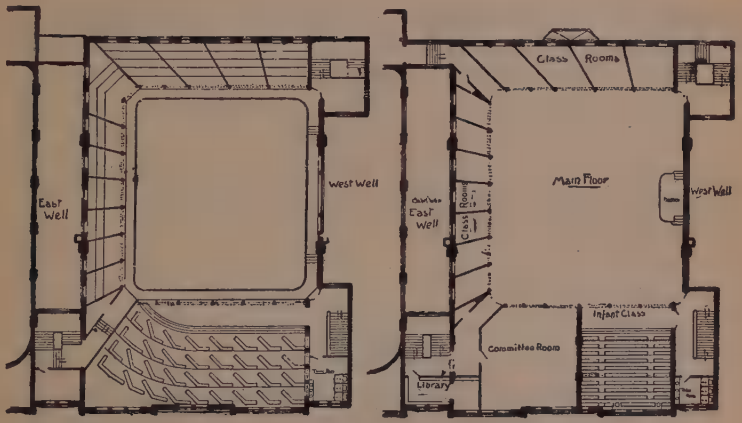
If possible the church should provide **not a room, but rooms** for the school. The primary department always needs a separate place. It need not be connected with the main school at all. The Bible and normal classes need separate rooms, and every class which can be thus isolated during the teaching half hour should have that advantage. As many of these rooms as possible should open into the main room, and be arranged so that every person can see and be seen by the superintendent as he stands at his desk.

There are several such **model Sunday-school rooms** in the land. The latest, largest, and probably the best of all, is that connected with the Tompkins Avenue Church of Brooklyn,

New York, of which Dr. Robert R. Meredith is pastor. The following description is by the architect: —

"The parish house has a frontage of about 110 feet on McDonough Street, and, as shown by the plans, is admirably adapted for its purposes.

"The Sunday-school hall is on the upper floor, and is reached by four wide stairways. Ordinarily one will be used by the school, and this leads past the library, where the books can be taken out or exchanged before entering the main room.



THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL ROOMS OF TOMPKINS AVENUE CHURCH.

The hall itself is compactly arranged and adapted for skilled and successful labor; it has a gallery running all round upstairs. The superintendent's desk is on a platform on the west side of the room, and is so placed that every one in the room can see the leader. In the main room there is space for about seventy classes of the intermediate grade. To the left of the platform is the primary department, where 250 pupils can be taught, and

above them, in the gallery, is the juvenile division, arranged for thirty-four classes of at least ten scholars each. To the right of the platform and in front, both upstairs and down, are class-rooms, twenty-two in all, fourteen of which will seat sixteen scholars each, the eight larger ones seating from twenty to forty persons. There is also a large room, which it is expected to use in the future for a Young Men's Bible class, with room for about 300. This will be used at present for teachers' and other meetings. All these rooms are shut off from the main room by sliding doors during the teaching. Over the superintendent's desk is a gallery for visitors. Where blackboards are needed in the separate rooms, they are fixed in the sliding doors. There is a large dome in the center of the ceiling, which furnishes the light for the main room, and the separate rooms are all supplied with gas-burners. The building is ventilated by a fan run by a motor, which supplies fresh air, while outlets are provided for vitiated air. The coloring of the walls and the general appearance of the room are most pleasing. But here, as everywhere, one perceives at once the subjection of everything to the purposes for which the building is erected."

(*b*) The church should **supply money for the expenses of the school.** If this is regarded as an essential part of the church, is there any reason why its expenses should not be counted into the annual budget, and provided for in the same way in which the other church expenses are met? A very small proportion of our churches do this, even where the means are abundant and the general unity is recognized.

Let the church estimate and appropriate so many dollars a week or a quarter or a year for the school — enough, if it has the means, to furnish it liberally with all the needed appliances for its work: enough, at any rate, to provide what is essential for its efficiency.

How this can be done in a poor church. A church school should never be asked or allowed to raise the money for its own expenses. If it is able to do it easily, it should not be allowed to be independent of the church. If only able to do it by much effort, it should never be put to that strain. But what if the church is poor and weak and unable to support the school and allow it to expend the money which it raises on missionary objects? Then, I answer, do as parents do who are in the same condition. Let the children and adults who compose the Sunday-school raise and earn what they can and bring it back to the common fund, the treasury of the church, and then let the church pay for its necessary supplies. Does some one say, "But the church would use it for other purposes and leave the school to suffer"? Well, if the children cannot trust the parents, it 's a hard case. The parents would better be put to school to the children.

(*c*) The church **should supply the school with teachers.** As in the matter of the place and the finances this should be with the best it can give. It has no better use for its best men and women than this, to teach the young, and the older ones too, to come in closest contact with them and so to stimulate them that they may come up to the level of its best intelligence and follow its best examples.

To this end let the church magnify the office of the teacher, let it exalt his privilege and his responsibility, let it pray in its services of public and of social worship for those thus engaged. Let it **arrange for the training of teachers**: well-prepared teachers will not spring up spontaneously; those most willing and by nature most apt to teach need to be drilled in the subject matter which they are to make clear to others: those most intelligent in this regard often need just as much to be taught how to impart the knowledge which they possess.

Do not let the church urge anybody to teach without regard

to fitness or without adopting some methods for preparing them. Let its best and brightest and most devoted young men and women be selected, trained, and consecrated to this important work and this exalted privilege.

(*d*) The church **should supply** the school with **a warm atmosphere of sympathy** and appreciation. It should not, as is too often the case, leave the school outside of its plans and thoughts: it should brood over it, and treat it as one of its most important departments. It need not pet it, nor treat it as a spoiled child whose demands must be met, but as a son of the house who has a right to a share in all that it contains as its prospective heir and head.

3. **The church should use the Sunday-school.**

(*a*) **For instruction.** Somewhere within every church and equally in every community there needs to be a training school for the young, and indeed for all who are not fully educated in religious things. Leaving the fullest place for parental and pastoral training, there needs a more general organization for this service. Indeed if this general foundation of Christian knowledge is laid by such an agency the way is made clear for the more particular training of both parent and pastor. It has been already indicated how this may take its place among the recognized agencies of the church. But its mere recognition in the organization is of less importance than its recognition in the use.

The church **should be in the school.** Not all as teachers by any means, but all, save those prevented by inabilities or disabilities, by sickness or by other duties, as students together of the Word of God. The idea of a well adult not being in the Sunday-school because he does not teach shows an altogether false idea of it. It ought not to be merely a children's school, but a gathering of all who have yet anything more to learn about God's Word that they may learn it; and

if there is any one who has no more to learn, he should certainly be there to teach.

There should be **a place for all**: teachers, if possible, for all; adult classes without teachers, if need be, where all may ask and answer. The invitation should be given to all. Some of the most *perplexing questions* would be answered forever in a school thus composed. The boys would not outgrow it at sixteen, but would grow in it to manhood and old age. There would be no graduating exercises or process, but a constant ascent toward the heights of Christian knowledge. It would in many places come to take the place of one of the preaching services, and then the pastor could use it as often his most effective service of the day.

A model Sunday. What could make a better division of the Lord's Day than — 1. A service of preaching; 2. A service of Bible study; 3. A service of testimony and conference; all these of course being services of worship?

(*b*) **For development of power.** The church needs to find helpful service for every member of it; something for each one to do which is done for an important end, and which, by the way, tests abilities and develops strength. The devotional exercises of the prayer-meeting, and the secular duties connected with the society, and the social duties arising from its relations, are not sufficient for this purpose. The Sunday-school is of all the best spiritual gymnasium of the church as well as its best school for instruction. There are room and place for many to work there as well as to be fed. Watch those who give promise of faculty for teaching or for other service; test them by using them as substitutes; train them by normal classes or by putting them under the best teachers, or working them with efficient officers; and then lay hands on them, not suddenly, but after this due deliberation, and set them apart for the service which they can render best.

Mission work. If there is not room in your own church school, look around and find the place where you can establish a mission school, and put your new and prepared material into it with a mingling of your tried home workers. You will thus put fresh life into both. A Sunday-school planted by missionary effort in a frontier town often has saved the Christian lives and characters of those on whom the responsibility of maintaining it has been laid. He that works, eats and digests his food. He who studies in order to teach learns fastest and most thoroughly of all.

(*c*) **For evangelization.** That means the proclamation and offer of the gospel to those outside the church. The Sunday-school is the easiest of all means for reaching the households which do not belong to the church or even help to swell the congregation. It may be made the connecting link with scores of *Christless homes* in every village, with hundreds in every town, with thousands in every city. It is a power which has been largely used and yet has more largely been neglected.

When a *new family* comes into a community the children want to go to Sunday-school, and often the parents wish to have them go, either to be rid of the care of them for an hour, or because they know that their children need to learn what they cannot teach them. Let the church follow the child back to the home. The teacher, the superintendent, the visiting committee, the deacons, the pastor — let them all know about this new household in their midst; let them be sure that the invitation is promptly given to the parents to come with their children to the house of God (a delay of a month may serve to fix their habits in the home); let them show kindness, not officiously, not ostentatiously, but in the real spirit of friendly helpfulness, and the problem of reaching the masses is more nearly solved than by any other answer. So the church may spread its influence through the community and some gleam

of its light shine into many darkened homes. Let the church use the Sunday-school if it would appreciate its power.

The church is responsible not merely for the training of its own youth and children, but especially for that of those who have no such help at home; and this all the more as our public schools are compelled to drop all religious instruction.

II. WHAT THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL SHOULD DO FOR THE CHURCH.

Of course its duties are largely reciprocal and complementary to those of the church, as the duties of children are to those of parents.

The school should recognize its place in the church and *accept its supervision*, its *support*, and its *service*. It should never resent the fact that it is not the whole or the head. Its superintendent should never forget that he is an officer of the church, and that in the church office is a place of service rather than of authority. To him is committed indeed a larger administrative trust than to any other officer of the church, but he is therefore only the more to hold himself responsible for his faithful discharge of its duties. The teachers should hold their places individually and together in the same spirit of loyalty to the whole body of which they are only one part. There should be always the fullest consultation and coöperation, and no plans should be adopted which can conflict in any way with other interests of the church. Indeed, if the organization and spirit be such as has been already suggested, there can be nothing but harmony.

As an expression of this unity and dependence: —

1. **The school should report to the church.** This should be fully and formally done at the annual church meeting, where the superintendent is to be elected. If this is not

already the practice, as there may be delicacy in one outside the school suggesting it, it would be well for the officers and teachers of the school to invite the church to assume this relation and elect the superintendent or confirm their election, already conditionally made.

2. **The school should contribute to the church** if its aid be needed. I have already said that the church should support the school, and I adhere to that proposition in all cases. But the church may not be able to provide for both the preaching and the teaching services. If the parents cannot furnish the table for both themselves and their children, would you have them separate their interests and say, "We will provide for ourselves; do you go and earn or beg your food"? No; not even if they begged it for their parents. They would say, "Children, you must help us provide for us all. We will do all we can, and you must add your earnings, and together we will have enough to go around. At any rate we will work and eat together." So I say, let the school contribute to the church, and then out of the common fund let the church provide for the school as well as for the pulpit. It might be well for every Sunday-school to make some contribution to the church in recognition of its care and love; just as it is well for every son and daughter to do some service in the home.

3. **The school should send its charities through the church.** This is a suggestion which may seem to some extreme and unnecessary, and which only in a very few instances is done. But look at it a moment. Here is a church or congregation composed of families, men, women, and children. What are the facts as relates to the giving to Christian objects of these families and those who compose them? At the annual meeting of the church (either as it was held until within a few years, or since the writer devised the plan of

making this the grand yearly festival of the church with reports from all its organizations and activities), the charities of the church are reported. They include the contributions taken at the service of public worship, at the monthly concerts, or by a system of weekly offerings, or by all these combined. This is all that is accounted as the giving of the church. But gather up all the giving of the Sunday-school, the various missionary and other organizations, women's and children's mainly, and you add, in many cases, two thirds, and sometimes more than that, to the contributions of the church, which are not the charities of the church in reality, but only of the men. Why there should be this distinction it is hard to say. Why there should not it is easy to prove. The church should be the center in each community of its Christian life, and I hold that all these various organizations should pass their offerings through the church treasury, taking the church treasurer's receipt, and have them passed over as the contributions of the Women's Auxiliary or Home Circle or Christian Endeavor Society or Sunday-school of the particular church of which they are a part. That would be a practical and efficient way of recognizing the unity of the church and would do something to counteract the centrifugal tendency of the times.

4. **It should secure a more regular** and general **attendance** on the other **services of the church.**

The services of public and social worship should be announced in the sessions of the Sunday-school. Officers and teachers should know which of the scholars do, and which do not, attend these services, and should do all in their power to encourage them all to be there. Invite them to sit with you, or sit with them at first, or see that they have a regular place to occupy; keep a record of their attendance; ask them for the text; give them a sermon record book; speak well of

the pastor, and tell or question about the sermons; get your pastor to remember them in his prayers and preaching always, and occasionally to have a service adapted especially to them. Keep it in your mind and in theirs.

5. **It should add to the membership of the church.** As it is intended to lead to, and in, the Christian life, this matter of confessed discipleship should be made prominent as a test and expression of the accomplishment of this purpose. Indeed, as a fact, the Sunday-school comprises the class from which the church secures a large proportion of its accessions. But this is not enough: it should be so as the result of its definite aim and work. To this its plans, its prayers, its teaching should tend: to exalt the church as the body of Christ and membership in it as the distinctive mark of discipleship. With this in the thought of all who give form and character to the Sunday-school, it will be still more marked as a preparatory school for entrance to the church, as well as for training in it.

CHAPTER V.

The Sunday-school and the Pastor.

It is of prime importance that the pastor should have a **definite place** in the Sunday-school and a definite relation to its work. As the leader of the church in its spiritual life, he cannot disregard this part of it any more than the preaching service or the prayer-meeting. As teacher as well as pastor, he should be felt in this, the teaching service of the church. He does not need any official relation to it except as it is involved in his pastoral office. As pastor he should look after the lambs and the young sheep; as teacher, he should care for the pupils. It is not often necessary or desirable that he should administer all the details of the school or class management; and yet he should be familiar with them and a constant adviser. His relation with the superintendent should be intimate and paternal. He should be regarded as, and should be in fact, **the pastor of the school,** and should be always so announced and published.

What should be his special relation and how should this relation be expressed?

I. IN THE SCHOOL.

He should be there. This is the best and easiest way of showing his interest. If possible, his other appointments should be so arranged that he can attend. Certainly his work of preparation for later services in the day should not be postponed so as to prevent him.

He will be more likely to attend with regularity if he is expected to **take some part** in the opening and closing services of the school. If the superintendent allows him to sit by his side without recognition or a claim for assistance, he will naturally come to the conclusion that his presence is of no importance. He ought to be free to say what part he will take and should not need to be invited or permitted. He should often lead in the prayer, sometimes in the reading; sometimes, if not always, he should show the connection of the lesson with that for the preceding Sunday, and should, if he have the gift, sum up the practical lessons of the hour's study with a brief review or address. He can do some of his best and most effective preaching in this way and at this time.

Should he teach a class? Not unless the necessity be very great. He belongs on Sunday to the whole church and the whole school. No half dozen or score of members should monopolize his strength and time. He should always study to do the most good to the greatest number. Least of all should he, as is so often done, devote himself to an adult class of church members who need him least of all. If he must take a class, let it be a class for training teachers or a class of young men who will not come unless they are taught by a man of intelligence and force.

He may in general more easily, if he teaches, do so **as a substitute**, now in this class and now in that: so he can become acquainted with his young people better than in most ways. He may be able to drop into the separate classes, and, without interrupting, aid the teachers here and there in unfolding the truth, may answer the hard questions which continually arise, and so come to know the work of the teachers, as well as the wants of the pupils. Whatever he does should be done with reference to the service and advantage of the

greatest possible number. He should not use up strength on a few which belongs to the whole.

One reason **why all good ministers do not do this service** in all these ways is because the church does not wish them to, or at least does not arrange to have them.

Let pastor and church consider carefully what is the best use of his limited strength for the Lord's-day work. Must he preach at least twice? If he can reach essentially two different congregations, as is the case in many of our cities and large towns, he must save himself for that second service. If he supplies more than one pulpit, consider his strength and see whether he can do more in the Sunday-school with others without lessening his ability for that part of his work which he must do alone. Let his part in the Sunday-school then be light and flexible, but let it be for all. A five-minute application at the close of the lesson will often be his best preaching service of the day. Can the Sunday-school be made to reach the congregation as a whole? Can a Bible service be connected with it at which he may teach? Let the church see to it that he has the opportunity, and free his hands for such service. The question ought perhaps to be, What part does your church allow the pastor to take in the school?

II. IN THE PULPIT.

Here the important thing is that the pastor should remember the Sunday-school. If it is on his mind as one of the important departments of his and the church's work, the fact will find appropriate expression. It will be **in the prayers**: the needs of the school, of the teachers and officers will be brought before the Lord. It will always be among the notices with occasional words of especial invitation to its classes and to its teaching force. Reference will be made to it now and

then in **the sermon,** as a field for Christian work and an opportunity for the study of God's Word. Once a year or so it will furnish the theme of the discourse, its prayers will be received, its wants set forth, and its value emphasized. Occasionally the pastor will preach to the Sunday-school, giving the service of praise into their hands. Indeed, in one church at least, the scholars are seated together in the gallery and every Sunday morning take part in the reading or repetition of Scripture and in certain of the hymns. The pastor who does these things will of course have something for the young in all his sermons, that they may be attracted not only to the special but to the regular services of the church, as they will be where such things are done. He will perhaps **shorten his sermons** a little and enliven them a good deal if he remembers the Sunday-school and the young. He will occasionally preach **on the lesson** or on some theme which will help its explanation, especially when the subject is difficult or needs side lights. He will sometimes preach **to parents** about home study of the Bible, about home preparation for the Sunday-school, and about the importance of bringing their children with them to the public worship of the house of God.

III. IN THE PARISH.

This same remembrance will accompany the pastor outside of the pulpit and the Sunday-school room. He will of course not forget the school **in his prayer-meeting.** Then it will not infrequently form the theme of the conference and prayer. He will frequently talk over the interests of the school **with his superintendent,** both that he may learn more about it and be of more assistance. He will bear it in mind **in his pastoral visits** from house to house. He will have a list of

the names of all the members of his Sunday-school as well as of the church; he will call on them or see that they are called on by others. He can thus attract many to the other services, to regular attendance, and perhaps to membership in his church. He will inquire about them, learn from Christian parents and others about their characters and needs. There can be no better theme for conversation in the homes of his people than this.

He can aid **in the teachers' meeting.** If there is none, he can often organize one. If there is one held occasionally and for business only, he may be able to secure its regularity and introduce the study of the lesson into it. In this he can take the lead, if he is especially fitted for such service, and if not, he can sit by and to an almost equal degree aid and direct the study. He should know if possible what and how his teachers are teaching, and should in some way guide them in this most important work.

Do you say, "No pastor has time to do all this"? At any rate, he has time for some of these things, which **ought to be done in a well-regulated church and school.**

CHAPTER VI.

The Organization of the Sunday-school.

The Purpose of Organization. Organization is in order to efficiency. There should be just enough organization to accomplish this end and no more. A machine should be as simple as possible to do its work. Every needless wheel or band added increases friction and the chance of obstruction, and is a hindrance instead of a help. Organization is not a thing to admire, but to work. And yet a well-organized and well-managed Sunday-school, like a well-constructed machine, is the only one that can do the best work.

A written constitution is a plan of organization. It tells what the organization is to be; it gives the name, states the object, defines the conditions of membership, names the officers, arranges for their election, indicates their various duties, and provides for its own amendment. There is no way so simple of preparing for these necessary things as by adopting a constitution.

This both confers and limits authority. It determines who shall elect the officers and what the duties of each shall be. It locates the responsibility of classifying scholars and appointing and removing teachers, of selecting helps and books, of disbursing charities. It is important that all these things should be definitely understood, both in order that they may be surely done and that they may be done by the right person or persons.

[NOTE. — We give a form of constitution for a Sunday-school. It is based upon one in use for some years, with modifications suggested by experience. It is arranged so that by omitting the words in brackets [ ] it is adapted to the wants of a school which is not connected with any church.]

CONSTITUTION.

ARTICLE 1. **Name.** This organization shall be called the .....Sunday-school of .....

ARTICLE 2. **Object.** The object of this Sunday-school shall be to study and teach the Holy Scriptures, for the purpose of leading all who are connected with it to an intelligent Christian faith and life.

ARTICLE 3. **Membership.** All persons who express the purpose of attending regularly, may, after being present at.....consecutive sessions, be enrolled as members of this school. Officers, teachers, and adult members [who are also members of the church] shall alone be entitled to vote, except in the appropriation of contributions for benevolent purposes, in which case all contributors may vote.

ARTICLE 4. **Officers.** The officers, as far as is practicable and needed, shall be a Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, Secretary, Treasurer, Librarian, and Chorister. [The Pastor of the church shall always be recognized as pastor of the Sunday-school. He with] the Superintendent, Assistant Superintendents, Secretary, and three teachers shall constitute an Executive Committee, of which the Superintendent shall be Chairman. These all shall hold their respective offices for one year, or until their successors shall have been elected.

ARTICLE 5. **Elections.** A meeting for the election of officers shall be held annually on the .....day of..... The Superintendent shall be elected by ballot by the voting members of the school. [This election, however, shall not be valid unless ratified by vote of the church.] The other officers may be chosen in any manner decided upon at the time, or may be appointed by the superintendent, if not otherwise provided for. Vacancies may be filled at any time.

ARTICLE 6. **Duties of officers.**

(*a*) **The Superintendent** shall conduct the general exercises, preside at business meetings, classify scholars, and by all means in his power, both in school and out, labor to promote its best interests.

(*b*) **The Secretary** shall keep a faithful record of the membership, attendance, contributions, and business meetings of the school, and report weekly, monthly, quarterly, and annually, as may be required.

(*c*) **The Treasurer** shall receive the funds of the school for its expenses or for charitable purposes, and shall pay them out only upon the order of the Executive Committee, and shall make a detailed report thereof at the annual meeting.

(*d*) **The Librarian** shall have the care of and shall distribute the books, lesson helps, and other literature belonging to the school under direction of the Executive Committee.

(*e*) **The Chorister** shall conduct the singing of the school, subject to the approval of the Superintendent.

(*f*) **The Executive Committee** shall appoint and remove teachers, select and purchase lesson helps, library books, and other literature for the school, attend to its business, disburse its charities, and in every way possible provide for its efficiency and welfare, always subject to a majority vote of the voting members of the school.

ARTICLE 7. **Duties of Teachers.** It shall be the duty of the teachers to make thorough preparation for teaching the lesson; to attend the teachers' meetings; to be punctual and regular at the sessions of the school; to keep order in their classes; to strive to win the affection and hold the attention of the scholars; to pray for and if possible with the scholars; to visit them at their homes, especially when they are sick or have been absent; and by all proper means to try and secure the object for which this school is organized.

ARTICLE 8. **Classification.** This Sunday-school shall be divided, so far as practicable, into Primary, Intermediate, and Senior Departments. There shall also be organized Normal and Home Departments when in the judgment of the Executive Committee it shall seem best.

ARTICLE 9. **Sessions.** This Sunday-school shall meet regularly every Sunday at.....o'clock, and the exercises shall usually be limited to one hour.

ARTICLE 10. **Amendments.** This Constitution may be amended at any regular session of the school by a vote of three fourths of the voting members, provided that notice of the proposed amendment has been given at the preceding session [and provided that such amendment is first approved by the church with which the school is connected].

This form may of course be modified to suit the needs of any school. Even where it is considerably changed it may be of use as a basis on which to build or from which to depart.

A word may be necessary in regard to the **importance of an Executive Committee.** The session of the school is evidently not the place for the discussion or transaction of business. That children should have no part in deciding matters affecting the interests of the Sunday-school is as evident as that they should have no such part in meetings which discuss the interests of the day-schools or of the town. Nor is the teachers' meeting the best place for considering and acting wisely on such matters; the attendance is too irregular and the responsibility borne too lightly. This is especially true in the larger schools. As in the church, the committee is the place for discussion and for planning. Dr. Schauffler calls this the Superintendent's Cabinet. It should include the heads of departments when there are such, as the Superintendent of the Primary Department, and of others which may exist. It is the Church Committee of the school, which can at least prepare plans for the adoption of the school.

The reasons for the part given to the church in the organization of the Sunday-school are fully stated in the chapter on the relations of the school to the church.

CHAPTER VII.

Classification and Departments.

CLASSIFICATION.

1. **Classification of Scholars.** The superintendent has no more important work to do than to classify his scholars. The name *class* implies that a number of individuals possessing common characteristics are placed together. Mere indiscriminate groups are not classes.

(1) **By capacity.** The true principle of classification is that those of similar attainments and capacities should be grouped. They will be able to receive and profit by the same teaching. Their position in the public schools will often be a good criterion by which to judge of the ability of boys and girls. Besides this, they will ordinarily prefer to be classed on Sunday with those with whom they are associated during the week.

(2) **By age.** In addition to this it is not improper to consider age. It is humiliating for one to be placed in a class of those much younger. It is better to regard this feeling than to drive a backward pupil out of the school. Then too it brings an added stimulus to bear upon him.

(3) **By social position.** This should not be regarded from the standpoint of pride on the part of those rich or cultivated, but only for the comfort and self-respect of the poor and ignorant. To some of these, association with those better dressed or better mannered than they would be uncomfortable: to others it would not be. Take care that all such are made

to feel at home and indirectly do all possible to keep these distinctions out of sight.

2. **Classification of Teachers.** It is just as important to classify teachers as scholars.

(1) **As to the grade of scholars which they are fitted to instruct.** In other schools this is carefully considered. It is equally important in the school for the study of God's Word. Some can teach the adults, some the boys, and some the girls and some the little ones. Each should, as far as possible, be given the work to do which each especially enjoys and for which each is fitted. It would be very strange if in any school of considerable size all were adapted to the same grade of pupils. The general law of averages and variety may generally be trusted to provide material.

And then each teacher when his adaptation is found should be *kept to the grade for which he is fitted.* It is better therefore to change the class every year or two. A class which has grown up with one teacher from little children to young manhood or womanhood has not ordinarily had the best care. The probability is that there has been too much monotony in the method and the matter of the teaching. Let each change be really, and be recognized as, an advance in both of these respects. This wisely done will help to hold the scholars.

(2) **As to the number each can care for.** For all have not the same capacity in this respect. It is so with ministers: many can preach to a hundred who could not possibly preach to a thousand. It is so with overseers of any kind of work. One builder can superintend four men who would be at his wits' end with twenty to keep at work. Give each good teacher as large or small a class as he can do his best with. If you have class rooms, it would be better to have six first-rate teachers with twenty scholars each than twenty inferior teachers with six in each class. The best Sunday-schools are coming to this: fewer teachers and larger classes.

DEPARTMENTS.

The Natural Division. The smallest schools cannot well have any division except into classes; or rather can have no union of classes into departments. It will ordinarily have at least **three classes** which correspond in grade to the three most necessary divisions: that is, for children, youth, and adults.

1. **Primary,** including children up to nine years of age. Sometimes in a large school this department may well be subdivided into those who can not and those who can read.

2. **Intermediate.** Those from ten to sixteen years old. This too is capable of division into Junior and Intermediate grades, the dividing line coming at about thirteen years of age.

3. **Senior.** Those above the age and attainments just suggested. These, in a school of moderate size, will naturally be divided into young people's and adult classes.

There should also be, in every school where it is possible, a **Normal class** for the preparation and training of teachers.

A **Home Department** is also an important, and should be considered an essential, part of a Sunday-school.

The Teaching Appropriate for Each. As to teaching, the Primary Department should emphasize the stories of the Bible; the Intermediate its histories, which are stories of the chosen people and the Christian Church. The young people should be led into the study of the Bible as a whole and of the parts as related to it. The older classes naturally study the doctrines and principles of revelation.

All this may be done by a wise preparation and use of the International System, emphasizing for these different classes: (1) the stories; (2) the connected history; (3) the book and its contents; and (4) the truth of Scripture, and their illustration by experience.

Certain it is that for the main body of the school nothing better has yet appeared. Whether the infant class and the adult Bible classes may not do a better thing is not so sure.

I. THE PRIMARY DEPARTMENT.

1. **The Name.** It is much better to call it this than to speak of it as the Infant Class. There may indeed be an infant class in it, but that name, if used at all, should be confined to the littlest ones. Even then it is not strictly appropriate. An infant is properly one who cannot speak. Even in the legal sense an infant is one who cannot appear personally in court. The name Primary Department dignifies it far more, and the failure to dignify the Sunday-school has wrought mischief in it all the way up.

In **addressing them** too, it is better to say "Children," than "Little children," and to remember that simple speech is acceptable to everybody, but baby talk is nauseous to all but babies; and if they could express themselves, even they might protest against it.

2. **The Place.** (*a*) This should be if possible **a separate room.** It should be so separate that singing in it will not disturb the other departments, and that their singing or reading together will not distract the attention of the little ones. If there can be no separate room, **a simple screen** may serve, or a blackboard may be so placed as to secure some privacy. Get the children as far as you can by themselves, where their attention will not be called away and where they and you can be free and not disturb others. (*b*) It should be **a cheerful room,** as pleasant as it can be made, light, decorated with agreeable colors, and every way homelike. If ever so plain, at least it should be clean. A few bright pictures should adorn the walls, — some of the lesson pictures, perhaps,

— flowers in their time, and autumn leaves in theirs, and evergreens for Christmas should be brought in to add to its attractiveness. If the school is where there are none of these natural adornments, ingenuity and love may find something to relieve the bareness.

(*c*) **It should be comfortable.** If it be possible, have low benches or little chairs for the children. You cannot expect attention if their backs ache from lack of proper support. Make them comfortable and give them the feeling that the church has made special and thoughtful provision for them.

3. **The General Exercises.** Let these all be easily **intelligible to the youngest.** There is enough in the other services of the church which is to them in an unknown tongue. In this one place let everything be for them. We do not believe that it is best for them to try to share in the service of worship of the main school. That cannot be perfectly adapted to both classes. Either it will be made too juvenile for the school, and so especially unacceptable to the other boys and girls, or too old for the youngest children. It is gratifying for a superintendent to see all the school together; but that is not nearly as important as that all the scholars should receive the most profit.

What they may have in common. If they have anything in common, let it be only an opening hymn which all can sing, verses which all can repeat, or the Lord's Prayer, in which all can unite. Do not ask the little ones to sit by and see the school do things which they do not understand and in which they cannot take part.

The singing should be made much of. It should be **simple in its melody** and of quite limited range, not very high nor very low for young voices. The **sentiment** of the hymns should be as simple as the tunes; they should express

child praise and love and trust, in the simplest words and with the simplest feeling.

The words should be repeated by the children after the teacher, until they know them perfectly, for those who most properly belong in this department are those who cannot read. Their memories must serve them for a hymn book.

The **words should be taught** either separately, or taught with the music line by line. A song roll will help those who can read, and they will give confidence to the rest. If the printed words can be sent home with the request that the mothers teach them to the children during the week, a double good is done.

The **meaning of all new hymns** should be explained to the children, or brought out by question and answer, so that the teacher may be sure that they are not merely sounds repeated parrot-like, but are sense to the mind and are understood and if possible felt.

There are many little **motion songs,** which interest the minds and by action rest the bodies of the children. Use some of these, by all means.

If there is no separate room for the Primary Department, the children can be taught the same songs, and sing them only with their lips or in a **whisper.** You cannot expect them to keep still or interested as long continuously in any one exercise as the older ones.

One of the **standard hymns** that are used in the public worship of the church can be sung at each session with profit. This fits the children to join in that service and helps to increase their interest in it. If the pastor knows that even the little children can unite in them, he will be likely to give out these hymns more often than others.

The prayers should be **simple** too, so simple that the children can easily repeat the sentences as they are spoken by

their teachers. And this is an excellent way to secure their attention and participation, as well as to learn to pray in short and intelligible words.

They should be **brief.** A minute or two is enough to express the simple praise and thanks and petitions which are appropriate to such a place.

The children should be taught to be **reverent,** to bow their heads and close their eyes and fold their hands in prayer. Reverence may be taught by the posture of the body: it cannot be without it.

4. **The General Teaching.** In a small school where the primary department is properly only an infant class, the youngest class of all, the teaching must probably all be done by one teacher. **Where all are in one class,** if possible secure a private room or some privacy in the general room. While it may be more difficult to follow rules in such a school, that lack may be made up for by the greater familiarity and homelikeness of the service.

Variety is essential. Here it is just as important as in a larger school to remember that to keep the bodies of little children long in one position or their minds occupied with the same thing is contrary to the laws of their nature. Physical and mental restlessness are sure to follow, and restlessness means inattention. Keep the scholars busy and with frequent change of exercises.

In a primary department of some size, the teaching should be done both by its superintendent and its teachers; there should be both general and class teaching.

The general teaching which precedes the class teaching should be a **memory drill** on the Golden Texts, or such other verses or truths as are being committed to memory, and on such general facts connected with the Bible history and the life of Christ as such children ought to know. Patient **repetition** is the only means to a faithful memory.

The eye should be addressed frequently. The blackboard here is an indispensable aid. It need not be used elaborately or with artistic skill. The **imagination** of the child is largely developed, and a rude suggestion on the board accompanied by an explanation of what is meant is full of meaning to them. A child who can see a doll in a clothespin and a baby in a doll can supply your lack in art.

A word or two, a line or two, made in their sight and explained as made is better than an elaborate picture brought in complete. Much of the elaborate blackboard work is quite beyond their comprehension.

Objects presented to the eye are always full of interest to children. A spool of thread, a blade of grass, a bird in a cage, a few blocks to represent houses, a hundred other familiar things may be used to illustrate the facts and truths taught. We know a mother who carried her little children through almost all the Bible scenes and stories by sitting with them on the nursery floor and representing the actors and events with men and women and other objects rudely cut with scissors from newspapers.

Surprise is an important element in teaching children. Keep that with which you are to interest them out of sight until you need it for use. If you have a lesson picture, do not produce it until it is needed. Let them look at the illustration of the preceding lesson up to that moment. So with the blackboard, the song roll, any charts you may use or any objects: produce them when wanted and keep them out of sight when not in use.

The general teaching after the class teaching should be in the way of review, to find out from the scholars what they have learned, and to supplement the teaching. Drill on the Golden Text for the day. Get the children to tell you the main facts and teachings of the lesson. Then give them the

central truth clearly, with illustration, so that if possible it shall be associated in their minds with that lesson. Do nothing to lead them away from the lesson for the day, but deepen the engraver's lines by going over them.

5. **The Class Teaching.**

The subject should be the appointed lesson for the day. If there is more time than is needed, it can be used to prepare the class for the general teaching; but the two had better be distinct.

The story element in the lesson should be made prominent. If it contains none, its topic should be illustrated by one. Let it be simple, interesting but unexciting, appealing to the imagination rather than to the feeling. Children learn by incidents rather than by principles. Let the application be evident and if possible let the children point it out.

6. **The Responsibility of this Work.** The teacher should remember the responsibility of teaching the little ones. Their unquestioning faith should lead to great care as to what they are taught. Be honest with yourself and with them. Do not put off their questions with answers that do not satisfy you. It is far better to say, "I don't know," than to pretend to know what you don't. They are quick to find out shams, and to trust honesty. Do not teach your doubts. Give them something positive to accept.

7. **The Religious Needs of Childhood** are not unlike those of older people. They need an object for their **love.** Lead them to see Jesus: there is no character so winsome as his, there is no work which so calls for grateful affection as his.

Their **faith** is ready; let it be guided to their heavenly Father and to Jesus the Saviour. Teach them to trust him in everything.

Their **consciences** are quick. They ought neither to be sluggish nor morbid. Help them to a healthy and clear dis-

cernment of right and wrong; and help them to see it for themselves.

They need **sympathy**; and they have a right to look to their teacher for it. Their sorrows are as real as their sins. The teacher can comfort them in the true sense of giving them strength to bear their troubles.

The thing they need least is to have their **feelings** excited. These should certainly not be played with. Mere emotion which does not lead to action is bad for anybody, most of all for children. Do not try to make them cry over the stories of the Bible. Do not depict for them the sorrows of Gethsemane or the agony of the cross. Let the tone of the class be quiet, childlike, placid like that of the ideal home, and lead the children by gentle steps to the gracious Saviour.

8. **What the Primary Department should Accomplish.**

Before the children leave the primary department or class for the intermediate they should give proof that they have made certain **definite attainments,** that they have learned thoroughly certain things. They should be able to repeat the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, the Apostles' Creed, and perhaps the Twenty-third Psalm and the Beatitudes. They should know the main stories of the Bible and especially of the life of Christ.

Having been examined on these things, before the superintendent, pastor, and parents, they should be **formally promoted.** In some cases they receive a simple diploma, rolled and tied with ribbon. Teachers should be secured in advance for the new classes, and if they have met in a separate room, it is a good plan to have them march in to their new places, the school rising and their teacher waiting to receive them. A few words from the superintendent or pastor and special remembrance in the prayers of the day may help to make this service both impressive and useful.

9. **The Time and its Distribution.** An hour is as long as the younger children should be detained for any service. It should be all occupied, with no delays or intervals. As to the distribution of this time between the general exercise of worship and teaching and the class teaching, the exigencies of each case and the special gifts of those in charge are the only basis for a wise decision.

II. THE INTERMEDIATE DEPARTMENT.

The advance to this grade should be understood to be definite and significant. It should mean not simply that the scholars have grown so large or so old, but that they have learned so much. Having been formally transferred, there should be a **change in the mode of teaching.** They are now old enough to sit still longer at a time and to give attention to more continuous study. It is not necessary now to teach so much by object lessons, though now and then something taken from the teacher's pocket to illustrate a point may add to the interest of the lesson, and lead to the expectancy of an occasional surprise.

Locate places. Maps should be freely and constantly used. A place should not be named without locating it, until the scholars have them so impressed upon their minds that they can see them and describe their location without looking at a map.

Illustrate times and manners. Bring pictures into the class which illustrate the dress, the implements, and the manners of the people of Bible times. Make everything as vivid as you can. Get the boys and girls during the week to look up and tell about these things. Make the men and women of the Bible real to them, as you can only do by showing them in the times in which they lived, with their

own dress and manners, and with the knowledge of God which belonged to them.

Teach historically. Show what the words spoken must have meant to those who heard them, and what must have been meant by those who spoke. **That** makes an historical study full of interest and life, and brings to view the real men and the real teachings of the Bible. Do not bring them down into the nineteenth century and give them our knowledge and place them in our times.

If you are **teaching the life of the Christ,** remember that it was a life, one part of it being different from another. Teach them clearly the difference between the preparatory period and the three years (1) of obscurity, (2) of popularity, (3) of opposition, and locate each lesson and each teaching in regard to the whole. This of itself will make many things clear and interesting. **If you are teaching the words of Christ,** learn whom he is addressing in each case and you can teach his meaning better. Get at the principles of his teachings rather than at the particular precepts, and impress these principles on the minds and hearts of your pupils. The applications may change, but the principles never do.

If you are **teaching the growth of the Apostolic Church,** find the great steps of progress — they will be clearly pointed out in almost any helps; they will reveal themselves to you, if you will read the text often enough; show the condition of each church addressed in the Epistles, and then you can make the relations of the special exhortations plain. That will give individuality and life to the whole and to each part.

These injunctions are applicable to a degree to all teaching of all classes of scholars, but they are especially important for these boys and girls who are being taught thoroughly in the day-school, whose minds are open and eager if once their attention is secured, and who want information. You can

make the story of Israel and of the Christ seem to them as idle tales, or as the most real history and life, according to your treatment of them.

Remember that **the main business of the teacher is teaching,** not exhortation. Draw out the application from your scholars. Put it in few words yourself, but be thoroughly in earnest in those few words. Let them see Jesus, and let him draw them to himself.

III. THE SENIOR DEPARTMENT.

For the young people's classes, if they have been well instructed up to this time, it is not necessary to spend much time on the details of the Bible stories. It is always well to locate the teaching of a particular lesson in its place in the history or the life of which it treats. The principles laid down for teaching in the Intermediate Department should never be forgotten or neglected.

Here, however, your **teaching may take a wider range.** You may extend your lesson over its surroundings, you may get the full sweep of the incidents or teachings of a whole period. You may give more attention to the various books from which the lessons are drawn. You may introduce some normal work without giving it the name. If you have a class of high school boys, you may connect your lesson with the Roman or other history which they are studying. You must exert all your ingenuity and skill and intelligence to hold and to instruct them.

Here comes in naturally that most difficult question which is always arising: —

How to Hold the Young Men. About this time in their lives or a little earlier they begin to be restive and to wish to withdraw from the Sunday-school. How can they be held?

In general the answer is, by making it worth their while to continue in it. Expedients will be of little avail.

1. **By the attendance of older people.** It will do some good if their fathers and mothers continue to go too, if the older people generally are there; especially if those a little older than they are its regular members. The general influence of such example has some power.

2. **By dignity of general exercises.** So, too, it is important that general exercises of the school be dignified and worthy of their years. Every time the superintendent addresses the school as children, he does just so much to drive those who are not children away. Not only are they not children, but they do not want any one for a moment to confound them with the children. And if children's talk is heard and children's prayers are prayed or little children's hymns are sung, they feel far more out of place and are made far more uncomfortable by these things than are those who have been old long enough to be assured of it. It is not that they are afraid of the word "school," but they are just now busily engaged in putting away childish things and they do not want them continually replaced before them. Dignify the school if you would keep the older scholars. On this account also, if possible, have the little children's department by itself.

3. **By instruction suited to their intelligence.** But positively these young people must have instruction suited to their age and intelligence. They have been accustomed to it, many of them, in the high school, the academy or the college — or at least to advanced reading in the intervals of business; they must be led on and up in the Sunday-school or they will not continue to come. The teaching hints which have been given may be pondered over again in the light of this fact. Fresh information is the best attraction to them. They want to know more, and though they may not be willing to

work for it much, they may be made eager to receive it, and out of this may grow a more positive appetite and desire.

4. **By honest intellectual treatment.** Honest treatment is also an absolute demand of those of this class. They have come to a time when their minds have ceased to be merely receptive. They are inquiring, and are taking up many beliefs which they have inherited and are asking for their grounds. It is a most critical time for them. Will they grasp the truths to which they are accustomed or will they let them go? It is no use to say to them now, "It is wrong to raise the question." In the first place, it is not wrong; it is the only way to a faith of their own. In the second place, the questions being already raised, nothing but a reasonable answer can settle them. Treat them then not as heretics but only as inquirers after truth, and *give them no answers to their questions which do not satisfy your own mind.* The importance of this counsel cannot be overestimated. Better say, "I don't know," a hundred times, than to try to silence some honest question by a disingenuous answer on which your own faith does not and can not rest. If you cannot answer them, go with them and together lay your question before one in whose wisdom and mental integrity you both have confidence. More young persons are betrayed away from their faith by the neglect of this rule than in almost any way.

Sometimes **a topical study** is good for senior classes, a course really in **Biblical theology,** gathering together the teachings of the Old Testament and of the New. Only great care must be exercised here **not** to make this **a mere matter of proof texts** gathered by the sound and not by the intended sense. No single text of Scripture should ever be used to prove a doctrine without reference to its context and study of its original intent. A careless gathering of proof texts for topical study has been the origin of more bad theology and

more dishonest thinking than all other sources combined. Guarded against this evil, this method of study may be of great value. It should be always begun with the earlier teachings of the Old Testament and come on historically to the New. There is light in the Old Testament, but "grace and truth came by Jesus Christ," and it was the Comforter who was later to lead the disciples into all truth.

Invite questioning. Another way is to let each scholar bring to the class the question from the lesson which most interests him, with all the light he has been able to bring, and open it up for further light.

For the **more mature classes** in this department **their own inclination** as to the subject and method of their study **should be consulted.** There is no reason why the regular lessons of the school may not interest and profit them. They can be studied with reference to their doctrinal and ethical teachings. This class of students is more interested in the abstract principles of the Bible and in the teachings of experience than the younger classes. Only, if it has a teacher, do not let such a class become *a debating society*, as too often happens. Especially, do not let some man with a hobby get in and ride it round the circle formed by the class. If necessary to stop that, get him out by some means. Let it be a class that shall state and compare their views; let there be no discussion, no trying to win others over to their views on the part of any; but after the various opinions have been stated, let the teacher declare his best wisdom on the subject and go on to what he desires to bring up next.

The teacher of such a class too should **keep his class to the Bible.** It is a Bible class. Mr. A's notions and Mr. B's ideas of what ought to be are of no value to it, however much they may be to these good brethren themselves. The only question of value in the class is, "What is the teaching of the

Word of God?" except perhaps this equally important one, "What are the limits of its teaching?"

IV. THE NORMAL CLASS, OR DEPARTMENT.

Good teachers are made by training. Good teachers do not come to be such by accident. If they inherit the traits which are desirable, they do not thus come into possession of the knowledge that is needed.

When to hold the Normal Class. This class may be held at the same time with the school; but, if this is done, the disadvantage is that those comprising it are the ones who are needed for temporary and substitute teachers, and that many who are teaching regularly need its training most of all. It had better be at some other time, perhaps before or after the midweek service of the church, or in connection with a teachers' meeting, or whenever the attendance can be most regular. Here no lesson should be missed. It should be made a definite engagement.

It should perhaps be held for **a limited time each year.** A course of weekly meetings extending over from three to six months, with a definite time fixed for closing, is best.

The leader of the class should be the best qualified person who can be secured. It may be the pastor, the superintendent, some public or other school teacher — whoever can do it most regularly and efficiently. It does not require great ability or genius to teach a normal class successfully, though of course these gifts may do much to add to its interest. The main qualities needed are patience and clearness. Frequent repetition of the main things to be learned is the secret of a thorough mastery of them. To lead in this drill is one of the main offices of the leader of such a class.

There are **two lines of study** open to such a class.

1. **The character and contents of the Bible.** Its books, writers, periods, geography, its history and its moral and religious teachings.

The object of this class is to impart a thorough knowledge of the main facts connected with the Bible as a whole. This knowledge will facilitate the preparation of any particular lesson. It will cause the various facts and truths to fall into their right places in the system. It will give that surrounding knowledge which enables the teacher to answer questions not within the limits of the lesson, and which is full of suggestion in the actual work of teaching.

2. **The principles of teaching**, especially of teaching Bible truth; that is, how best to impart the knowledge gained.

There are a variety of books well fitted to guide the study of classes of this kind, a few of which are named and commended.

I.

The Bible, the Sunday-school Teachers' Text-book. Alfred Holburn, M.A.
The Bible. Alvah Hovey, D.D., LL.D.
Bible Studies. A. E. Dunning, D.D.
Studies in Old Testament History. J. L. Hurlbut, D.D.
Supplemental Lessons. J. L. Hurlbut, D.D.
The Four Gospels. J. L. Hurlbut, D.D.
The Life of Christ. James Stalker, DD.
A Short History of the English Bible. J. M. Freeman, D.D.

II.

The Seven Laws of Teaching. J. M. Gregory, LL.D.
How to Teach the Bible. J. M. Gregory, LL.D.
The Young Teacher. Wm. H. Groser, B.SC.
Outline Normal Lessons. J. L. Hurlbut, D.D.

V. THE HOME DEPARTMENT.

One of the evidences that the Sunday-school is alive is that it has been always developing in new directions. It has readily taken up new problems and adapted itself to new conditions. It has taken ever-widening views of its opportunities and sought to meet them.

The Home Department has come to be one of the most hopeful of these expansions of the Sunday-school idea. The **idea of home study is not new**: parents have been urged to share it with their children for many years. It is in line with the University Extension idea, which proposes to guide home study for those who cannot come to the centers of learning. Indeed the idea seems to be included in the injunction to Abraham in regard to the religious training of his household.

The beginning of the present movement was in a plan set forth in 1881 by Dr. W. A. Duncan for the formation of Home Classes, to be connected with existing Sunday-schools, which was adopted by the Executive Committee of the New York State Sunday-school Association and recommended by them in a circular.

About three years later, Doctors Dike and Dunning contributing to its development, this grew into the Home Department plan, and the **Congregational Sunday-School and Publishing Society** prepared visitors' blanks, an explanatory letter, and cards for the agreement and for the report of study. Since that time the plan has been adopted by the Presbyterians, the Baptists, the Methodist Episcopalians, the United Brethren, the original publishers granting permission to use the copyrighted matter. From 1890 on, the idea gained favor rapidly and has spread through all these denominations and into interdenominational organizations. The idea has

gone across the ocean and has taken root in England and Europe.

Its object is to carry the benefits of the Sunday-school, in its Bible study, its connection with the church and all its privileges, to those who cannot regularly come to it. It has been thought that these were only for the service of those who could attend: this department carries it into the home.

Its Need. There are many who are so situated that they cannot be at the same place of worship regularly on the Lord's day. Some live too far away and have no means of conveyance. Others are detained by their duties to the children or the sick. Others are away from home a considerable part of the time. To these this compensation is proposed for their absence from the place of gathering on the Lord's day.

Its Method. *A visitor* is first needed. Some one to go kindly to the home, to propose the plan, to secure the signing of the agreement, and to leave the Quarterly. This visit should be repeated at least once a quarter, to receive the report card and to renew the lesson help. It may well be made oftener in many cases; it is best if it ripens into personal friendship. It is not to be confined to those who are outside of the church or congregation. It is well to begin with the members of the church who can not or who do not attend the Sunday-school, and to secure their coöperation. If they will participate, it takes away the feeling that this is work among the heathen, and makes it only work among the homes. There need be no more organization than this to carry on a small Home Department successfully. Members can be added to it by correspondence. *A superintendent* is needed, with a corps of visitors in a large school, or where the work is undertaken on a large scale. This officer should be a man or a woman who is an enthusiastic believer in this work, and who can advise and guide the visitors. They may often be a

Sunday-school or Christian Endeavor committee. The superintendent had better act as secretary also, and so keep the reports and records well under his own eye.

It is a department of the school, like the Primary Department, though not meeting with the school nor indeed meeting together. It should be thus recognized. The names of all its members should be entered on the roll of the school. They should be furnished with lesson helps, papers, and library books as other members of the school are. They should be reported to the school at least quarterly, and occasionally a report or letter should go from the school to them. They should understand that they are invited and are always welcome to the sessions of the school, or to any of the meetings of the church. They should have the opportunity of coöperating by contributing to the expenses of the school and to its charitable work. They should be especially invited to any festival or social gatherings of the school, and, if possible, there should be at least an annual rally for a friendly meeting of all the members of this department.

Its Flexibility. It can secure the membership of a single individual, or of the members of a family, or of a group of neighbors to unite in the study. It is as flexible as the varying conditions.

The advantages of this plan are (1) that it **provides simple Christian work.** It only needs a kind heart, a sympathetic way, tact to enable one thus to aid in extending the benefits of a regular study of the Bible. (2) That it gives a **definite purpose in** that **canvassing** of **neighborhoods** and visitation of homes which ought to be somehow done in every community. It is easier to do it in connection with this than with almost any other plan, and good may be done in many incidental ways. (3) **It adds to the numbers in the church schools.** Many who begin in the Home De-

partment come to desire the aid which they can only get by attendance. Instead of acting as a substitute, it serves as an inducement to such attendance. (4) **It covers the vacation periods.** The study of the lessons may be continued by the members of schools which either are dispersed in the summer or prevented from gathering in the winter. Many schools have been made evergreen in this way. In South Dakota a large Home Department composed of such schools is kept up through the winter by an energetic missionary of our Society. (5) But the greatest gain of all is that which it most directly seeks. **It brings** the ones, the tens, the hundreds, the thousands **into organic association with** this branch of **the Christian Church,** into regular study of the Word of God, and thus by his blessing in many cases into a personal relation to the Saviour of men.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Superintendent.

The Ideal should stimulate, not discourage. Upon the superintendent more than upon any one else depends the character, the progress, the work, and the welfare of the school. A model superintendent makes a model school. An imperfect superintendent will probably have an imperfect school. The rule for the school is "Get the best superintendent you can," and for the man, "Be the best superintendent you can." While we hold up a high ideal, we know it is an ideal, which never has been reached in all respects by any one, and which is not likely to be. It will serve a poor purpose if it should discourage and not stimulate. Do not use it to measure yourself by, but as a mark to strive after.

What should be the character, the qualifications, the aims, and the duties of a model superintendent?

I. HIS CHARACTER AND REPUTATION.

That is, what the man himself should be. Because his work is Christian work, he should be **a Christian man**; one who loves and trusts and follows Christ. He should be a man **of good report**, honest and upright, and beyond reproach in his daily life. These are the two important things, and of the two the latter is the more essential. If I could not secure a professedly Christian man to superintend, I would not prevent the people from gathering to study God's Word; but I would

rather close the doors of any school than to have it endorse any man by putting him into such a position whether a member of the church or not, of questionable life or reputation. It will do more harm than good. But the superintendent cannot be too really and heartily a man of God, a spiritual Christian. His work should be done under the highest motive, and he should be what it is the object of the school to make each pupil in it. For the very nature and aim of his work he should be all this. The reputable life he should surely have attained; the spiritual life he should be earnestly seeking.

II. QUALIFICATIONS.

The necessary qualifications for his work also depend upon its nature. What he is to do determines what he needs to be. He is to superintend a school, that is, to oversee and guide it in all its activities and interests. He is to endeavor to secure the best results from all its services and work.

1. **Will: for General Control.** He is, first of all, to lead in the general exercises, as they are usually called, of the school, and to maintain order and interest in them. That he may secure good order during the time of the general service he must be a man (or woman) of will, of force, of purpose, of self-control. This is a quality which lies back of qualities and makes them effective. One who has it secures ready obedience or compliance with his purpose. It accompanies a quiet manner, a simple dignity, an evident expectancy that the thing asked will be done. A boisterous, nervous, uneasy way usually is the indication of its absence, and fails of its results. A gift by nature largely, it may be cultivated by the maintenance of a steady purpose, and by the calming power of a prayerful preparation for the work. It is patient, of unruffled good nature, with a contagious confidence.

The best way to secure order is to **keep all occupied** — to have one exercise succeed another promptly. All gaps of unoccupied time are perilous. The school is without a head if the superintendent leaves his desk to consult about something he has neglected to arrange for at the proper time. The hold once lost is hard to be regained. A prompt, bright, expectant way is apt to win coöperation; scolding never does it. The leader must be quiet in manner if he expects quiet from the school; self-controlled, if he expects control of others. Let him be in his own person and manner what he desires others to be.

2. **Reverence: for its Worship.** He is to direct in the services of worship. He needs for this the spirit of reverence. If he has not this himself, he cannot impart it to his school. If he has it profoundly, he can make it felt by all, and can awaken a corresponding feeling in many. We do not like the name "opening" or "general" exercises. The singing, prayer, and Bible reading are services of worship; they should be distinctly set forth as such, and the same spirit of devotion should enter into them in the Sunday-school as in the church — and a good deal more than is shown in many churches. There is a silence which is more than quiet — it is the hush of reverent attention.

3. **A Bible Student: for its Teaching.** He is to superintend the teaching of the school. He cannot leave it all to the teachers. He must be a teacher himself, to know and judge of the work done in the classes by his teachers. He must himself be a Bible student, a Bible lover, and apt to teach. If he is not all this, he should try to become such an one. He should set it before him as a thing to be accomplished. He should not only study the lesson for the day, but try to get that general knowledge of the Bible which is larger than the lesson. He has connections between lessons to

explain, reviews to conduct, stimulating questions to ask, all of which will greatly help the school. A merely administrative superintendent can be of great service, but an intelligent, teaching superintendent of far greater. He can raise the character of the teaching all through his school. He can supplement imperfect teaching by adding at the end, either personally or through the pastor, the most important practical lesson. He can conduct the teachers' meeting, and in it or in a normal class can guide the teaching of his school.

4. **Tact: for the Administration.** He is to superintend the **teachers** and their classes, to adapt the one to the other, to grade the new scholars, to make occasional changes in the classes. For this he needs tact, and that comes from a quick sympathy which enters into the feelings of others. It will enable him to suggest and even to criticize his teachers without hurting their feelings or driving them away; to place his scholars, and to check their faults and spur them on to better work without offending them, and to secure the working of all the Sunday-school machinery without jar or friction.

5. **Loyalty: as an Officer of the Church.** As the Sunday-school is a part of, and the superintendent properly, whether in form or not, an officer of, the church, he should be loyal to the church. He should always remember his relation to it; should never for a moment allow himself to regard his Sunday-school as a rival to it, but should try in every way to make it a help to every other part of the church organization. He should be always ready to consult pastor and committee, and should make no appointments without being sure that he is not conflicting with or embarrassing the church in any way.

These are all qualities which the model superintendent must have. He must love Christ, his Word, and his people, and in the spirit of the Master try to help his scholars to intelligent faith in him. If this be his constant aim, his one thought, and

everything be subordinated to this, he will grow into the gifts and graces which are not his by natural endowment or present attainment.

III. THE SUPERINTENDENT OUT OF SCHOOL.

This is quite as important as his work and ways during its sessions, for these depend for their efficiency on the foundation he has laid for them before coming. A good superintendent will have the interests of his school on his heart and mind much of his time. In the intervals of business or other care he will constantly turn to this.

1. **He will pray for it,** for he will be a man of prayer. He will not undertake to do the Lord's work without the Lord's help. Thus he will prepare his own heart for his work.

2. **He will plan for it.** He will prepare carefully for the conduct of its worship; will select the Scripture to be read, the hymns to be sung, the person who is to lead in prayer. If he or others are to make any address, whether upon the regular or a supplementary lesson, the charities of the school, or on any other matter, he will carefully prepare for this, so that nothing will be left to go haphazard. Then if at the last moment he sees fit for any reason to change any of these plans, he will do it as an improvement on what he has thus previously laid out.

3. **He will study his teachers and scholars.** He will try to secure the coöperation of members of the church who are fit to teach. He will think often whether the right teachers and classes are together. He will consider the special gifts of each teacher, and try to place each where those gifts will be most effective. Thus he will study so far as he can all his scholars and their grouping. He will visit, converse, plan with his teachers separately and together, so as to secure the best

good of the school. He will never fail to regard and know its spiritual condition and to try to make that what it ought to be.

If his is **a large city school,** he may not be able to know his scholars in their homes, perhaps not even his teachers; but if this be impossible, he will try to accomplish the same acquaintance, at least with his teachers, in some other way. He will perhaps appoint a meeting for prayer and fellowship just before or after the school. He will have a **teachers' meeting** regularly, at greater or less intervals of time. And in these he will have it one important aim to meet his teachers personally and to confer with them about their work. He should be ready to talk over their special difficulties with them, and, with the list of the class in hand, the relation of the teacher to each scholar in the class. For he will of course have a complete list of all his classes, and a record of at least their attendance for each month, transcribed from the secretary's book.

If his be **a small school,** he will know his teachers intimately, seeing them in their homes and his, and knowing their scholars through them and personally as well.

4. **He will do all he can to help them,** both in the management of their classes and in the study of the Bible, by suggestion and by example. He will try to have some guiding hand in their preparation for teaching, if possible meeting with them for that purpose; if not, seeing that they have the best aids for their personal study.

If he does all this out of the school, he will be brought into such relations with it that when it is assembled he can lead it easily and without friction and almost guide it with his eye.

IV. THE SUPERINTENDENT IN THE SCHOOL.

1. **He should be there in advance of the appointed hour.** He should know that everything is ready and in run-

ning order. He ought not to be obliged to do it himself in a well-regulated school, but in any he should see for himself that the seats are properly arranged, the song books distributed, and all the preliminary arrangements made. He should have his Bible open at the proper place for reading and the pages marked for the hymns to be given out. He should see that his assistants are on hand and his secretary and librarian. Then he may be ready for a word of welcome to the first comers. Some, knowing that they will surely find him there, may come for consultation. Or, if he feels the need of the last moments for preparation of heart for the service in which he is to engage, he may keep apart and by prayer and meditation come to his work more fully equipped. But without promptness, no one can make a good superintendent.

2. **The Service of Worship.** And now the hour has come for **calling the school to order.** How shall it best be done? Let the simplest possible signal be given. If he can take his place and by simply raising his hand secure absolute quiet, that is better than the bell. If the bell is used, a single tap is all that should be made. Then he should wait until all is still. A Scripture sentence of **salutation** or of praise may be the best of openings, spoken by the superintendent and responded to by the school, and then a **hymn.** Let it be announced and only a strain played by the organ or piano, and then let all sing. The superintendent can do much to make this in reality a service of worship. He should think of it as such, he should speak of it as such, he should criticize it only as such. Let him make a broad **distinction between practicing music and singing hymns of praise** to God. The first is important in its place, but it is not the same thing with the latter. As to the best way to secure this, we must refer to the chapter on the music for the Sunday-school.

The Scripture reading may be done **responsively,** if

the passage selected be adapted for such use, as most of the psalms are; or **alternately,** in which way with care even a narrative may be intelligently read; or by the **leader alone;** or by him and the **school together,** as may seem best.

How to secure the use of the Bible. Much has been said about the importance of having the Bibles brought into and used in the school. The best way in which the superintendent can help in this is to select for the reading by the school some passage other than the lesson, but bearing on it. This will necessitate the use of Bibles by all the school, and if they are necessary they will be brought if not provided by the school. There has, however, been too much made perhaps of the bringing of his own Bible by each pupil. That is desirable but not essential. There is no saving grace nor proof of special sanctity in carrying even a limp Bible under one's arm. The important thing is to be able to use one, to know and to find its contents. A general exercise in the merely mechanical way of finding texts would be by no means an unprofitable use of time, as a kind of scriptural calisthenics. But it is not necessary to have Shakespeare complete in one volume in your hand every time you read a play.

It is a valuable thing to have the school **memorize Scripture to repeat in unison** at the opening of the school — the Ten Commandments, the Beatitudes, a few psalms, and some of the words of Jesus, may thus be made and kept familiar.

The prayer should be earnest, brief, and simple, and led by one whom all respect. It should be adapted to express the religious feelings and wants of all the school. If the primary children are in these services, it should be simple enough for them: but it would be better on many accounts that in all their service they should be by themselves.

The leader should wait until every member of the school is

in the proper attitude, giving devout attention. A thankful, cheerful spirit should pervade the prayer. It should be explicit and unselfish, and should always remember any who are sick or in trouble. If the pastor or a teacher is to lead in this service, he should be notified at least a little beforehand, that he may be prepared to lead the devotions of the school in proper spirit and with the best expression.

These are the essential parts of the service of worship, and in them all the most important need is **a spirit of reverence**: for this, quiet is the first condition; an apprehension of what it means to worship is the second; then those who will can praise and pray, and those who cannot will at least not interrupt them.

3. **The notices** which are necessary should be given after the service of worship, or before it. Here, first of all, comes the notice of the public worship and preaching service of the church, with a cordial invitation to all to be there. Let there be some arrangement made in the church for seating without embarrassment any of the school who will attend. This is a matter which the superintendent might well have in mind as one of the incidental cares and privileges of his office. Other notices connected with the church, its prayer-meeting, its young people's gathering, or those more directly belonging to the school should be given. A conversational way of making these announcements is the best to secure attention and cooperation.

The superintendent should keep the school well **informed as to the special object of their charities,** so that they may know to what they are giving and so that it may be a real and worthy object in their thought.

4. And now the time for **the teaching** has come. Care should be taken not to prolong the general exercises unduly. They can be just as devout and have more spirit in them, if condensed.

But perhaps the teachers are not quite ready for their classes yet. Our system of lessons is not absolutely connected or consecutive. If all the teachers were prepared to make **the connection of the day's with the preceding lesson** clear, the superintendent would have no duty here. But the fact is few teachers have this clearly in their own minds. We suggest that just before the lesson the superintendent take not more than three minutes in which to bridge over the chasm between the last lesson and that of the day, or that he secure some one, pastor or teacher, for this service who can do it well.

Or if **a supplementary lesson** is to be taught upon the general structure of the Bible, the history it contains, the Holy Land, or the life of Christ, this is the place for it, before the lesson and not after, and always with the time which is to be given to it understood and strictly limited.

5. **The teachers take their classes.** And now if through their negligence any classes are still unprovided for, the superintendent must **find substitutes** or combine classes. This is a hard duty, unless there is a substitute class or corps. For it he needs great persuasiveness and greater patience, for few are willing to teach unless they have made special preparation, and fewer still are competent. If he can provide for this, he will do well.

During the hour of teaching **the classes should be undisturbed.** The superintendent should not interrupt them and he should protect them from interruption by secretary, librarians, or visitors. The teaching is the main purpose of the school, that all may be brought into contact with the Word of God and that the truth may shine into their hearts. Give the teacher a good chance to do his work. Keep everybody away from him. If your teachers cannot be trusted to make the best use of this half hour, try to get better ones, or make better ones of these. Perhaps some teacher will call upon the

superintendent to answer some hard question, or to illustrate some point of the lesson. He should be ready for this, having made careful study of the lesson and its surroundings; and he should be able to do it in a way to encourage the teacher and not to reprove him before his class.

If his school is large, **he ought not to take a class.** He will have enough to do to superintend, and what time is not engaged in active superintendence can be profitably spent in studying the classes. If his school has various departments, he should look in upon them all, in such way and at such time as not to disturb them, but so as to see if in any way he can assist.

When the teaching half hour is over, a simple preliminary signal having been given as notice that in three or five minutes' time that work must cease, with a single bell tap, or without it, the superintendent should claim the attention of the school. That this may be prompt and general he needs the assistance of every teacher and scholar.

The **closing services** should be simple, and nothing should be introduced which can interfere with the impression produced by the lesson. If possible, have **a brief review** and summing up — that is, have it if there is anybody who can do it effectively. In the best schools there is much poor or imperfect teaching; such an exercise makes it certain that every scholar will get the main facts of the lesson and the leading truth.

A lesson hymn and the Lord's Prayer or a benediction and response, and then **as quiet a dismissal as possible** closes the hour. Sometimes to insure order it is best to have the classes file out as each is called or to let the girls go first and then the boys, or the other way. A decorous departure should be insisted on, or better, should be secured by wise management.

CHAPTER IX.

The Sunday-school Teacher.

I. THE TEACHER'S QUALIFICATIONS.

THE teacher is the immediate agent by means of whom the Sunday-school is to accomplish its purpose with the scholar. As that purpose is to lead each one into and in an intelligent Christian life, the teacher should be fitted to be a spiritual guide and leader. This purpose may be accomplished partly by **personal influence** and partly by **instruction.** The first is quite as important as the second. Character is to a degree contagious. We grow like those with whom we associate and whom we respect in our association with them. A teacher has influence by what he is as well as by what he says. The teacher, then, should be what it is the aim of the school to make the scholar, an intelligent Christian. It is impossible to secure the best results where this is not the case. No one can accomplish much by saying "Go"; the effective word is "Come."

A Sunday-school teacher should **love God** our Father and Jesus Christ our Saviour, and should show his love not simply by obeying but by keeping his commandments. They should be precious to him as guarded treasures.

He should **love the Bible:** not in an emotional way if that were possible; he should have a love that leads him to it, that compels him to read and study it, that makes him eager to tell to other people the good things he has found there.

He should **love those whom he teaches,** and should

make that clear by the pains he is willing to take to help them on in Christian knowledge and life.

This love for God, his Word and his children should lie back of all other qualifications. With these he will be useful, however meager his other gifts; without these he will be of little value, whatever external accomplishments he may possess.

For the other means of influence, namely, **instruction**, he must be "apt to teach." The ability to impart knowledge to others is quite different from the possession of information. The one who knows most is by no means always the one who can excite the most interest or communicate the most instruction. What does aptness to teach imply?

There is a radical **difference between preaching** or lecturing **and teaching** a class. It is not that those are less teaching than this, for the pulpit should be the great chair of instruction and the pastor should be the teacher. The difference is in the method of teaching. The teacher's method is by question and answer, by comparison of views, by testing the information acquired all the way on. It involves a more active state of mind than merely listening, for there must be a responding, too. It involves a more clear insight into the needs of those taught; for they are constantly disclosing these by their replies, and so it involves a more definite application of the truth as a necessary consequence, if the opportunity be improved.

II. THE TEACHER'S PREPARATION.

In all this he **should be prayerful.** He is to teach God's truth. For it he needs the aid of the Holy Spirit to illuminate his own mind and enable him to see the things of Christ. If this aid is earnestly sought, it will never be withheld.

1. **General Preparation of the Lesson.** The teacher should **begin his preparation early,** certainly not later

than a week before he is to teach the lesson. He should know enough about it earlier than that to lay out some definite work for each pupil to do in preparing it.

All truth which we acquire needs time to be digested, to be assimilated, to become part of ourselves, before we try to teach it to others. A little time corrects the crudity of our views, gathers illustration around them, and makes us master of them as we cannot be in any other way. Saturday night is by no means soon enough to begin the preparation.

He should become thoroughly familiar with the Scripture to be taught. This should be in the first place studied without reference to teaching it. He should study it first of all for his own instruction and use. He should read it through to get its general sweep and impression; not once but several times, until he has become familiar with it as a whole. Then he should read the surroundings and especially the preceding text. He should get a clear idea of the connection of this lesson with that which has preceded it. He should locate it in its proper place in the history of Israel, or in the life of Christ, or of the early Church, as the case may be.

To comprehend the lesson in its application and use, he should have some **general knowledge of the particular book** in which it is contained. The special object for which the book was written is a key to the understanding of its parts. This knowledge is best gained by reading the book as a whole several times, but may be reached for use by reference to introductions to the Bible, or handbooks, or the helps which are contained in teachers' editions of it.

2. **Particular Preparation of the Lesson**, sentence by sentence, should follow this. Make note of any words or phrases which are not clear in their meaning, and get all the light you can on them. Try first to think them out, then refer to their use in other parts of Scripture; use your dictionary,

and last of all seek light in commentaries and lesson helps. These last are important, and ought not to be neglected, after you have worked without them. They are of greatest value to correct your views, not to supply you with ready-made pictures. Study the persons named, locate on the map the places mentioned, get each incident clearly in your mind, and especially let the truths which it most evidently teaches impress themselves upon you.

You have studied thus far for your own sake. Now, with this store of information and thought it is time to begin to think of those you are to teach.

3. **Preparation for the Class** comes next. Call up before yourselves the persons you are to teach. How old are they? What do they know? In what kind of study are they most interested? Are they Christians or not? What methods of teaching have you found most successful in the past?

And now, set them over against each other — this lesson of which you are full, this class in which you are deeply interested; how can you best use this for their good?

You can now **make your plan,** or adopt a plan which you have found. You will use whichever will best serve your purpose. By your familiarity with the text, its cleavage lines have probably met your eye; you have seen its natural divisions. Each of these has a central idea. Your teaching is to lead your pupils to discover that idea for themselves. You are to lead them to it; but you will, if it is possible, give them the delight of the discovery.

Plan your questions so as to lead up to this. These should be carefully thought out and prepared, at least in the direction they are to take and the ground they are to cover. Until you can form questions which will bring out the main truths of the lesson, use those which have been prepared by others, who are skilled in such work. The appearance of

independence and spontaneity in your class is nothing compared to thoroughness in your teaching. When one has studied well, it does no harm to use the questions printed in the helps; it is only when these questions are used to save study, and without it, that they do harm. Probably in such cases the lessons would be even duller and less interesting if they were not read from the book.

Plan your illustrations. If the questions are the frame of your house, the illustrations are the windows. They are to let in the light. All people, old and young, are interested in incidents and stories. They remember them longer and more vividly than they do or can abstract statements. Keep your eye and ear open for incidents in human life, or facts in natural history which will make clear the truths you are trying to teach. Do not drag in stories for the sake of being interesting, any more than you would cut windows into your house where they were not needed; but be sure there are no dark rooms.

Plan your applications. Let them be legitimate, growing out of the lesson, not forced upon it — so far as possible the very truths which the lesson was meant by the Holy Spirit to teach. A thorough familiarity with a lesson will bring the main teaching to its proper place; so that each lesson will have a character of its own, and will not be a mere repetition of a few surface truths. Do not always take the easiest and most general applications of the lesson. Not every lesson teaches the way of conversion. Some teach humility, and some manliness; some patience, and some the time to be angry; some liberality, and some thrift. The gospel is good for this life as well as for the next. Get the whole round of the teaching as far as it legitimately comes out of the lesson.

Let the applications be in the way of suggestion rather than of exhortation. Repeated exhortation loses its force and becomes wearisome, as suggestion does not. If possible, get

the pupils to point their own arrows, that is, to make the application themselves; then with a few well-chosen words enforce it.

Do not get into ruts either of study, method, or application. Plan for new and varied ways of approach to the lesson, and for new ways of dealing with your class.

In brief, the teacher must know **what** he is going to teach, **whom** he is going to teach, and **how** he is going to teach. Without a definite aim he will be like one taking his class into a boat to paddle around for an hour aimlessly. With it he sets out with steady oar for some definite point. As some one has wisely said, "Plan your work and work your plan."

The more the teacher is **saturated with his lesson** the better. If it has gotten possession of him first, it may through him take hold of his class. His interest will be contagious. If he comes to it without deep interest, his class will do so too. If he is full of information, they will be glad to draw from it. If he is enthusiastic, they may, they probably will, in time, catch something of his enthusiasm.

III. THE TEACHER TEACHING.

1. A good teacher will try to excite an interest in the study and an appetite for the truth. First, **attention** must be secured, which in its beginnings is a mere stopping to listen, and in its end a stretching out toward the thing heard, as the derivation of the word suggests. This second amounts to **interest** or appetite. Mental food is of very little value without it. This is an easy thing to suggest, but the matter is of prime importance in teaching. Without it you can accomplish practically nothing. With this gained, an eager listening, a desire to know, the clay is in the hands of the artist ready to be molded. Some suggestions will be given later as to the means which may be used for this end.

To accomplish this,

(1) **Confidence must be won.** The pupil must come to regard the teacher as a friend who desires to help rather than as a critic or a judge. Question **on familiar things.** Get the pupil accustomed to the sound of his own voice. I have heard a class of children broken in to answering by being made to count aloud first.

A great deal may be said on the art of questioning. The main thing is that **the questions must be definite.** The teacher should know what the exact answer should be, and the question should be so framed that only one reply should cover it. Such general questions as, Who was Moses? should be avoided, for it might be answered, Moses was a man, or a prophet, or a lawgiver, or any other of a hundred things. On the other hand, **questions should not be leading.** Avoid questions which contain or suggest the answer without thought on the part of the pupil; except where in the case of the young or timid they are necessary to secure any response.

Ask no tricky questions. Don't try to catch your scholars, at least until such relations are established between you and them that they can bear it. Sometimes such a question arouses attention more than anything else; but it must be only where confidence is already established.

There is an advantage in using, or at least in not disregarding, **the questions in the lesson helps** which the scholars use at home in this, that if you ask these questions they can prepare on them and know that you will see that they have made that preparation by their answers to the questions they have studied. They are discouraged from studying at home if they work in one line and you examine them altogether in another.

Encourage all answers to your questions, however incomplete or wide of the mark they may be, if they are honestly

and seriously made. Do not laugh at them, or let others. Recognize some truth in them, and suggest a completer truth and a better form for it. Begin your correction of the answer with "Yes" and not with "No." Get the pupil to respect his own mind, to trust to his own thinking, or at least to his own power to understand God's Word; otherwise you will never make a Bible student of him.

Judicious questioning of course tests preparation, but **its main object** is to stimulate thought and bring the truth into clear statement.

(2) **To awaken curiosity** is the next thing; that is, "a disposition to inquire, investigate, or seek after knowledge." This is stirred by showing the pupil that you know something worth knowing which he does not, or that there is something which may be clear to you both which neither of you have acquired. Show the corner of what you would have him eager to learn. Lift the curtain just a little, that he may get a hint of what is behind it. Get him to question you, and you have made a great advance. Do not tell him all you know even then, but suggest ways in which he can find out. Curiosity is natural to the human mind; it is only a vice when wrongly directed. Turned toward things which it is desirable to know, it is a quality to be desired. When Zacchæus "wanted to see Jesus, who he was," he had come to the beginning of all which followed to him.

Now you have brought your pupils' minds into an active state. They are no longer merely receptive, mere sponges to absorb what you give out. The next step is to

(3) **Guide their thought and study.** It is good to awaken their interest and desire to know when they are with you in the class; it is far better to make this a permanent motive when they are away from you.

How to secure study by the class. This is one of

the most difficult problems to be solved, and one which troubles more teachers perhaps than any other. **The teacher must study himself,** of course; the class cannot be expected to study unless they see that the teacher does. They must see that the teacher knows more than they do and has made wider study than they can.

He must expect them to prepare, and they must see that he arranges for it. They must be always questioned with the presupposition that they have done some faithful work at home. If they have Quarterlies or lesson papers to aid them in the home study, the teacher should examine them along the lines laid down for them in these. This recognizes their preparation and gives them the opportunity to show it. Such recognition of work done is an essential stimulus.

They should also be given **special topics to study up in advance** for each lesson. Simple ones, of course, for the younger, and more difficult for those further on. Select the subject for each one which will be most likely to interest him. Use the Lesson Themes and Seek-further Questions, if you use the Pilgrim Quarterlies. These cannot be answered properly without previous study. Give each one something to do, and give all some things to do in common. Cut out work for them if you want them to do it. How much home study would the public school teacher secure from the pupils without some such expedients? The best teachers are using them more and more in our day-schools.

Persuade them especially to study and read **the connection between the lessons** and the intervening history; always examine on this and make it clear.

If you can do it in any way, get them to follow the schedule of **Lesson Work for the Week,** so doing something each day in preparation for the class. This will probably secure the best results of all. If you try to secure such study as this from

your class, you must be able to assure them and to show to them that you do it yourself.

In all teaching, **questions from the class should be invited** and freely welcomed. Anything is good that will secure their mental activity during the hour of teaching. It will then be an hour of learning too.

More than one course of lesson helps now provides **Home Study Slips**, on which questions are asked with a place for written answers. These are to be filled out at home and brought to the class. A comparison of the answers written, with kindly criticism and suggestion, may be a great aid in stimulating thorough study and preparation of the lessons. The same remark holds true of the written quarterly examination papers.

2. **The teacher must have fresh information to impart.** He is a teacher first, not a preacher, and if he were the latter, a basis of new or fresh facts is often the best foundation for his after exhortations. How shall he get fresh information? The Bible is an old book; its facts are familiar. We answer, There are always fresh facts to be learned or a fresh putting of old facts as a result of **fresh study.** Never trust to your previous knowledge in teaching a class. However experienced you may be, you will not interest your class or do justice to your lesson unless you have made recent and special preparation for your teaching. And if you study, and especially if you study the Bible itself and not merely commentaries or books about the Bible, or lesson helps which are other people's opinions about the Bible, you will almost always be able to come to your class with the feeling that you have something new and fresh to give them. It may be a very old truth which you have come to, but it is yours now because you have **found it for yourself,** and you will come to your class with the eagerness of discovery and the eagerness of desire to tell of it.

What one has read as the result of other people's discoveries may be interesting or not; but what he tells as the result of his own exploration is sure to be so.

Your own mind must be active: not merely repeating, but thinking. You may think in the old ways as much as you please if it is your own thinking. The teacher who ceases to learn ceases to do good teaching.

One who would be ready to teach should have **a stock of definitions** of the most important and constantly recurring truths. These should be thought out, studied out, gleaned from the best sources, thoroughly comprehended and committed to memory. They should be always ready for use, like coins of the realm. Such words as faith and love, salvation and eternal life, repentance, forgiveness, justification, should be clearly understood and consistently taught, and pupils drilled in them, as in the scales in their musical education. These are the foundation stones on which to build — only the teacher must see to it that his definitions are scriptural and true. This will give steadiness and consistency to his teaching. Without it he is likely to be always fumbling where he ought to be sure and firm in his touch.

3. **The teacher is to influence the wills of his pupils.** This is where he touches and molds their character. You may excite attention and impart information to any extent and yet leave the springs of character unreached. When one says, "I will," and does the thing he wills, he becomes better or worse. This decision is not to be affected by much exhortation: that soon wears out; but by **getting the thought concentrated on that which attracts** to itself. If you can so set forth the good men of the Bible, most of all the God-man of the Bible, so that they or he seem worthy of imitation and winning in invitation, you have done your best work. The way to avoid the power and influence of evil is to turn

away from it and not look at it or think about it. The best way to come to love and choose the good is by keeping it before the mind in its most attractive aspects. The teacher who can fill the mind of his scholars with high ideals of the Christly life prepares them thus to yield to the leading of the Holy Spirit.

And it is just here that **the presence and power of the Spirit** is most needed to make the truth effective in the heart, to bring the will under its power. The teacher can help by making the truth as clear as he can, by setting forth Christ as the Friend and Saviour we need, but only the Spirit of God can renew the heart or even make it willing to be renewed. Here the teacher must speak, feeling that he is in the presence of God and with continual prayer to him to bless the Word, to take these things of Christ and show them to his class, to convince them "of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment."

IV. THE TEACHER AS A FRIEND.

The teacher out of school is no longer the teacher, but the friend and companion. His first qualification has been spoken of as his love for his pupil as well as for the great Master and Teacher. This he cannot put off and on at his convenience. If it is genuine, it goes with him and stays with him and is part of him.

The secret of Christian love. Does any one ask how he can love any one simply because that one happens to be in his class? We suggest that if we are like Christ his love will be ours for all with whom we have to do. And this reply is true, which is not one based on mere duty but one also of experience, that it is easy to love any one whom you try to help. Indeed the trying to help proves the love already there. You cannot try to help any one without becoming interested in him.

The teacher then will **bear his class upon his mind and heart** during all the week. He will be planning how to interest them when he next meets them. He will see this or that thing in his observation or in his reading by which he can make the next lesson, or some truth in which they are interested, clearer.

He will **want to know his scholars in their surroundings and in their characters.** He will wish to see the homes from which they come and to secure the coöperation of their parents, or to coöperate with them if they are already seeking the best good of their children. He will be interested in their school, their work, their play, their companions, their reading. He will desire to enter into their lives as he comes to know them, and, as one way to do this, to let them enter into his. He will open his home to them together and apart. He will aid them if he can in securing places in which they can work. If they are in trouble, he will show them sympathy. If they are in special temptation, he will try to strengthen them for it or to avert it from them. He will not be either a pastor or a father, but he will be a loving teacher.

That is **what Jesus was to the apostles,** and the word by which they spoke of him most often was Teacher (though it is translated Master in our Bibles). If you can make the name yours in some little sense as it was his, and can be worthy of it, you will have a title high enough for any ambition.

We have known some such teachers of the little ones and of those older, both men and women, and they have always exercised a wonderful influence on those who came under the guidance of their instruction and within the circle of their affectionate care.

V. THE TEACHER AND THE DISCIPLINE OF THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL.

Apart from teaching, a good teacher can do much to help the general character of the school in its order, its spirit of coöperation, and its worship.

The good teacher will be **promptly in his place** in the school, at least five minutes before the opening. This is the time to greet the pupils as they come, to express kindly feelings, and by the mere presence to prevent that levity and play which in the youngest classes, and sometimes in older ones, is a poor preparation for the worship and study which are to come. The example of promptness too, as are all other examples, is contagious.

Let the teacher **come to order instantly** on the first signal from the superintendent, and then secure the order of the class. The superintendent has been appointed to his place by competent authority; he needs and has a claim to attention when he asks for it. Teachers are thoughtless here sometimes, and do not sufficiently realize that they have enlisted under this captain and should never, even in the least things, set an example of insubordination.

The teacher should also **actively participate** in all the general exercises of the school; should rise promptly when it is called on to rise; should join in the readings, in the repetition of the Lord's Prayer, in the singing if possible, and should encourage all the class to participate heartily in all these services, as well as in answering questions which are asked of the whole school.

He should **never find fault with the management of the school** in the presence of his class, but sustain it loyally, giving to the superintendent in a kindly way any suggestion which he thinks may be for the benefit of the school. He

should report cases of need to him, and should seek his advice in the work of teaching even more than he gives it for the work of superintending.

He should recognize the superintendent, too, in declining to **receive a new scholar or transfer** one from or to another class without his authorization; should notify him of any removals, and should assume both that he is interested in all that concerns the class, and that he is a superior officer in the school. This will do much to support his authority and to maintain discipline and good order.

In the same kindly way he will **inform the librarian** if he discovers any books among those circulated in the school which are for any reason objectionable, and will suggest to him or to the library committee any which are especially desirable for the library.

If compelled to be absent from the class, he should, if possible, **provide a substitute teacher**; if he cannot do this, he should always notify the superintendent, and that, as long before the time of the school session as practicable.

He should **attend all meetings** of teachers or others, called in the interests of the school, and show by his promptness in coming that he regards these interests as second to none.

The good teacher should carefully watch the attendance of his class. He should secure promptness by every means in his power. He should **take notice of every absence**, so that the pupil will know that if away he will be missed. Often the best way to do this is to assume that the pupil must be sick, and call to inquire for him at once. If the call cannot be made, at least write a note to the absent one. If the teacher is unable to be present, he should send word by his substitute or write to the class, explaining his absence, and if he encloses his regular contribution, it will emphasize his regret, and enable him to take some part even though away.

If **any of his class leave the school,** he should know the reason, and where they are going to be taught. Often by correspondence those who have been formerly members of the class can be reached and helped into or in a Christian life, even more than when they and their teachers were in frequent personal communication. Any unusual expression of interest will be especially noticed and felt.

In **taking a new class,** not only greet those who attend, but study carefully the whole roll of the class, and if any have recently withdrawn, especially since the loss of the last regular teacher, give them a special invitation to return, by note if not otherwise.

Refractory scholars are sometimes found in the Sunday-school. They cannot be dealt with as in the public or private day-school. The worse they are, the more they need the Sunday-school and its influences. Be **patient** with them. Pray for them. Be kind to them. Try to win their confidence and love. Often a rough boy will do much better with a good woman as a teacher than with a man; his sense of chivalry will check him. If you can **get such a scholar to help,** to do some little service, you may often win him to your side. Give him your book, and ask him to mark the attendance for you. Consult him about some difficulty which does not concern him. Assure him that you know he does not mean to trouble you, and appeal to him to be thoughtful for you and for the class, if you must speak to him directly about his behavior. If after all patience and prayer and management, he disturbs the class and school, try again several times, and only as a very last and unavoidable measure, expel him. And even then go after him and try to win him back.

Of course the good teacher will be thoroughly **loyal to his church.** He will try to secure the attendance of his scholars at its regular services of worship and at all gatherings where

they may get good. He may do this by asking for the morning text, providing them with text-books, telling them of the interesting things that occur, inviting them to sit with him now and then, or offering to sit with them. If he sees the benefit of this habit to them, he will find some way, if not to secure the end, at least to show his interest in it.

VI. TRAINING TEACHERS.

A teacher ought at some time in some way to have the benefit of a **normal class training.** This makes the groundwork for all his personal study, furnishes the general information which ought to be the background of each lesson, and suggests methods of teaching and, to a considerable extent, the contents of the teaching too.

The **teachers' meeting** comes after all this, and is a good place to bring the questions which have arisen, but the answers to which have not been made clear by private study. This meeting must have to do mainly with the *what* to teach and not with the *whom* or *how*.

Natural teachers. Many a teacher who has known nothing of the laws of teaching has yet done excellent and effective work, but it has been probably because, without learning it from other teachers, or even distinctly reasoning it out for himself, he has come by the impulse of his own earnest desire and by the criticism of his own experience to teach in accordance with the to him unknown laws of the human mind. It is fortunate that one may often do a thing in a right way without being able to explain how or why it is right. Practical knowledge is quite different from scientific knowledge. The theory may help those who are not what is called natural teachers; it may enable those who have gifts in this direction to develop them more rapidly. The process of our

own experience is slow; we may learn more rapidly, if less thoroughly, by the experience of others, which, reduced by observation to principles, furnishes scientific knowledge.

Three ways to fail in teaching. "Poor teaching generally misses the mark in one of three ways: — (1) Either the teacher does so much of the work that the scholar remains relatively passive; or (2) the teacher aims to cover too much ground, and so fails to bring out any one thing with clearness and force; or else (3) the teacher fails to connect the subject taught with the actual problems existing in the scholar's mind, and so fails to awaken his interest. The wise teacher will offer nothing himself which by any device he can draw out of a scholar. He will recognize that the average scholar can grasp at most but two or three new ideas in the course of a half-hour. And he must contrive to present ideas concerning which the scholar brings to the class a fair amount of curiosity and conscious ignorance. Any method of teaching which fulfills these three conditions is good and will succeed. Any method which neglects any one of these conditions is bad, and is sure to fail."[1]

Teachers more than systems. Much has been said about systems of lessons and plans for study. They are of great importance; but the most important thing by far connected with a school is the character and work of the teacher. The great need is better teachers, with a higher and more spiritual ideal and with a better and more thorough preparation for the work. A good teacher will instruct with a bad system or with a good one, with a text-book or without any. We have the best text-book and constantly improving helps. We need the best of teachers, and they are constantly growing better.

[1] President W. DeW. Hyde, D.D., of Bowdoin College.

VII. HINDRANCES AMONG TEACHERS.

1. **The unconverted teachers,** whether members of the church or not, can never properly accomplish the purpose of the Sunday-school. They may be fitted intellectually and may be excellent in imparting information in regard to all the external facts of the lesson, but are altogether unfit for making the spiritual impression which ought to be made. They cannot lead and are not likely to point their scholars to the Saviour. In some schools there may be no others to take their places. The call to them then is not to leave their classes, but to become Christians themselves that they may lead their scholars with them to Christ.

2. **The impersonal teachers,** who, though Christians, never talk personally and privately with their scholars about the Christian life. This diffidence or self-distrust should be overcome by prayer, by the sense of responsibility, by an appreciation of the importance of their mission, by honest effort to do their full duty. After one has prayed earnestly for another it is far easier to try to help him.

3. **The unexpectant teachers,** who do not expect their scholars to be converted. There are many Christians yet who have little faith in child Christians, who neither recognize child piety when they see it nor expect it to be attained. Of course they cannot work for what they do not hope for. They do not read the text, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it," but change it thus: "Train up a child for the way he should go, and when he is old he may get into it."

4. **The ignorant teachers.** By this is meant those who have never been instructed in general Bible knowledge and truth, or who have never taken pains to acquire it. A teacher should know more than is required to teach a given lesson;

he should know all around it; he should have general information on themes connected with his teaching. He must be ahead of his scholars in Bible knowledge or they will come to despise him as a teacher. Fortunately ignorance can always be overcome by effort.

5. **The entertaining teacher.** Sometimes for the sake of securing attention or of attaining popularity with the scholars a teacher will forget or neglect the real purpose of the school, and set out to make the class have an interesting time without regard to teaching the lesson or keeping them in touch with the rest of the school. The aim may be reached temporarily, but not for long. All such efforts after a while pall and are relaxed and meanwhile a whole class is demoralized. It is like giving candy to children until they have no appetite for solid and healthful food. Such entertainers are perhaps the most harmful substitutes for teachers; it would evidently not be proper to call them teachers in any sense.

6. **The disorderly teachers,** who do not promptly regard the superintendent's call for attention, who do not participate in all the services, who trifle when they should be serious, cast contempt on all the efforts of their chosen leader and hinder far more than they can help the school. If these things have seemed slight irregularities to any, let them remember that they are serious interferences with the good name, the good order, and the good work of the school.

7. **The unprepared teachers.** It seems inexcusable that any should take upon themselves the responsibility of teaching, and especially of teaching religious truth, and deliberately neglect to prepare themselves to do it. A little time every day would enable them to do it well, but a hurried glancing at the lesson just before going into the class is no proper preparation to teach. A class can be held better and more easily by good teaching than in any other way: no expedients can

make up for its loss. Teachers who are too indifferent to prepare as thoroughly as they can for each lesson are little help and often a great hindrance. Hundreds of grown boys and girls leave Sunday-school every year on this account. They are used to good teaching in the day-school and they know it or its absence. If the teacher does not respect them enough to prepare, they will not respect the teacher enough to attend.

8. **The irregular teachers.** One of the greatest trials of a superintendent is to have teachers who are irregular in their attendance or otherwise indifferent to their responsibilities. Of course unless he can supply their place with those who will do better he must make the best of it, and try to make them better. He can use all means except scolding to make them realize the importance of hearty coöperation. If all such means fail, and he can fill their places with more faithful teachers, he should in some kind but firm way secure the accomplishment of the change, in justice to the class. For an irregular or indifferent teacher can never have a regular and interested class; if it has been all this, it will surely degenerate to at least the teacher's level and more often below it. Those who persist in coming late or remaining away on any slight pretext should reform or resign. No school or class can succeed with such a leader.

9. **The dressy teacher.** Dress is sometimes a hindrance to the teacher's best work. The dress proper to be worn into the Lord's house or in the Lord's work should be neat but not showy. A display of fine clothes suggests the Pharisee rather than the publican at his prayers. If conspicuous jewelry and noticeably fine clothes are anywhere appropriate for Christians, surely it is not where they are trying to be interpreters of God's Word to others. They might come across some inconvenient texts at such a time. The dress should show

respect for the place; it should never suggest or promote self-consciousness. It is true that the poor may like to see fine clothes, but the contrast with their own in the public service can hardly be helpful to them.

CHAPTER X.

The Teachers' Meeting.

In order that the superintendent and teachers may work in harmony, it is necessary that they should meet from time to time for consultation. There are three possible objects in view in such a meeting which may be kept separate or combined in any proportions deemed expedient: devotion, study, business.

1. **The Meeting for Devotion.** In any meeting of those engaged in teaching God's Word this first element should not be wanting. A brief business meeting even should always be opened with prayer for divine guidance in the things about to be decided or done. Occasionally a purely **devotional meeting** should be held, in which only the spiritual interests of the school should be considered and reported on from the various classes, with much prayer for that Spirit who alone can make the teachings of Christ plain and persuasive. A meeting of this kind can hardly fail to be felt in the higher aims and deeper earnestness of teachers; they can seldom go from its atmosphere without more impressive views of their duties and opportunities and renewed resolves to be faithful to their trust. Often suggestions are made which are of great aid in reaching scholars, or information imparted which the superintendent or pastor may follow up with the best results; discouraged teachers may receive new impulses of hope, careless ones may be made more zealous, and those whose zeal is greater than their knowledge may have it wisely directed. There is an

influence upon the school in knowing that its work is prayed over and only entered upon after special consecration and petition.

The spiritual work of the school should be the frequent topic of prayer *at the prayer-meeting of the church.* Certainly once in three months is not too often for such a service to be held. But apart from this it is important that those actively engaged in it should meet more often to pray over their work.

Regular or Occasional. A meeting weekly for not over fifteen minutes, a little before the opening of the school, has been found useful in some cases: though the fact that both superintendent and teachers ought to be in their places ready to welcome their scholars raises a question whether this is the best time. Others have held this meeting at the close of the school, and have found it profitable to invite such of their classes as were Christians, and especially those who were thoughtful, to attend it with them. Certainly there are times when such a meeting should be held — at the beginning of the year or of the season when the largest spiritual results are looked for, and on days especially set apart for Sunday-school objects.

The reasons for holding such meetings for prayer are evident: —

(1) **The need of the Holy Spirit** in teaching the Word of God.

(2) **The practical aim** of all the work of the Sunday-school.

(3) **The promise to united prayer.** The oneness of purpose of all who attend gives especial value and power to such gatherings.

(4) **The help** which often comes from them **to the discouraged teacher.**

(5) **The effect upon the spirituality** of the teaching.

The deepening of the sense of responsibility on the part of teachers not fully alive to it.

(6) The provision of **a place to which to invite scholars** who are peculiarly thoughtful or serious.

(7) **The effect on the scholars** to know that their teachers meet to pray over their work.

These are surely sufficient and sufficiently weighty reasons why such gatherings should be held at least occasionally.

2. **The Meeting for Study** of the lesson is that to which this special name was formerly applied almost uniformly. There can be no doubt but that such regular weekly meetings are much less common than they used to be. The fuller helps which are provided for the teacher probably have made them seem less necessary. The multiplicity of other engagements has helped to drive them out. In the cities the tendency has been to merge the teachers of the individual schools into one or more large classes taught by men of special ability for this service.

And yet there can be no question of the advantage of a teachers' meeting for study connected with each school, if it be properly conducted. This it will be, if it has a leader who can keep it from the peril of all adult classes, — becoming a debating club, — and who can guide it wisely and firmly. This it will be if it be *not* used as *a place for the original study* or *preparation of the lesson*, but for the comparison of results, for the clearing of difficulties, for supplementing deficiencies, and especially for learning better methods of teaching. Part of the hour may well be given to some normal work on those general topics which form a foundation for all good building in the realms both of Bible knowledge and of the principles of teaching.

A superintendent or pastor who desires to know what is being taught and to have some shaping control of it will do well to secure and supervise such a meeting.

3. **The Business Meetings** of the teachers should be brief and not too frequent. Occasionally a superintendent is disposed to magnify this part of the school and to bring before his teachers unnecessary details for discussion. But the school is not a business concern and it should not be too much concerned with business. Let this be confined to what is necessary and to matters on which such consultation may be helpful. It tends to obscure the main end for which the school exists, to make too much of its external conditions. The product of the mill is more important than the machinery; when that is defective then this should be examined; but the superintendent can study it better than a mass meeting of the mill hands.

4. **The Social Meeting** of teachers, especially in large schools, is often both desirable and delightful. It is of great use for those to know each other who are engaged in a common work. A simple tea together cements the friendships and is one form of Christian communion. Of course this is to be united with one or more of the kinds of meetings already suggested.

How often to be held and when. Meetings of these four kinds may be held regularly or occasionally. A quarterly or monthly meeting for what little business there is to be done, and the rest of the hour given to consultation and prayer, is always good. Even an occasional meeting for study may be a great help, though not so valuable as a weekly gathering. The time and place, whether on the Sunday just before or after the school session, or in the week, before or after the prayer-meeting of the church, or at some special evening and at a private house, depend upon the convenience and habits of the community. Only let it not be neglected because the teacher's work is not thought of sufficient importance to justify the use of the required time.

CHAPTER XI.

Reviews.

Their necessity. There is comparatively little value in teaching without reviewing. Repetition is necessary to remembrance. Impressions once made by even the best of teaching fade rapidly; they must be renewed over and over again. Facts and truths once learned must be looked at again and again until they are like familiar faces, which we expect to see frequently and recognize in any crowd. The review is "the finishing and fastening" process.

1. **Review of facts is repetition.** The mere going over again of the trodden path makes the objects which line it plain. There is virtue in mere repetition. That is the process of "committing to memory." That is the way to learn the books of the Bible in their order, the classes into which they are divided, the names and dates and events which give us the measuring points and lines for its history. A constant drill in these is good for all, especially for children. They learn rapidly in this way. They forget as rapidly without it. The process may be varied so as to excite and maintain interest. Repeating singly, as a whole, in sections, alternately, or continuously, can be made a bright and pleasant exercise. Definitions of fundamental truths should be constantly repeated in the same form, that they may be a sure and usable possession. These should be called up frequently in the course of instruction, and so kept fresh.

Review of truths and teachings is more than

repetition. It is viewing again that at which we have gazed before, but it is or should be from a different standpoint. A review should be a new view of old truths. They should be evidently the same, and yet they should be seen in a new connection or a new light so as to have some charm of novelty about them.

2. With this distinction in mind, how may **the weekly reviews** be conducted?

(1) **They should be constant.** An annual or even quarterly review is of very little use unless it has been prepared for by weekly reviews. One may learn a review lesson for a quarterly exercise, but it is a great task, and is so far a new lesson that the benefit which comes from frequently going over the same ground is lost. The object of the exercise is lost, and largely the pleasure of it too. The quarterly review should be the great field day of the school, the dress parade, the exhibition of that which has been learned during the preceding weeks, the final fixing in the memory of the Scripture which has been studied, and of its teachings.

(2) **They should be Scriptural.** They should impress the words of Scripture. The Golden Texts in every school should be called for by the superintendent, and those for the previous Sundays of the quarter should all be gone over at every session. If you notice where this is done, the texts of the early Sundays come to be well known and well recited, and as the advance is made to the later Sundays the voices are fewer and more uncertain, because the repetitions have been fewer. Perhaps the only way to make up for this would be in every case to go back twelve lessons, even though half or more of the texts belonged to the previous quarter. This would insure an equal opportunity to become familiar with them. In these days when the art of memorizing is made less of than formerly, it is not a little thing to fix one important text in the memory

for each Sunday of the year. This can be accomplished by any superintendent, however lacking in gift for teaching. It is simple drill. Put the first word or two on the blackboard if necessary, but rather get the texts associated with the topics of the lessons and with the truths taught.

(3) **They should be topical.** The **titles** of the lessons are of very little value to be learned. The **topics** are important because they contain the truth of the lesson, and in some helps (as the Pilgrim series) they are especially studied in their form with reference to their use in reviewing.

(4) **They should be for the whole school.** This should be done by the superintendent as a general exercise. Every teacher should take part in it, and if possible secure the participation of each scholar. If for any reason it is not done for the whole school, the teacher should see that it is not neglected in the class.

3. **The Quarterly Review** should be carefully arranged for and conducted. The weekly review of texts, facts, and teachings should have reference to this, which should be the keystone of the arch to make all sure and strong. It should : —

(1) **Secure and test the memory** of the Golden Texts.

(2) **Make plain the period covered by the lessons reviewed.** This of course should be done in the preview and in the weekly study.

(3) **Bring to light the main facts,** though this should be done briefly.

(4) **Emphasize the most important spiritual teachings.**

Various methods. There are many ways of conducting such a review : —

(*a*) One is to **construct a new lesson** out of the united lessons of the quarter, with the blackboard to help ; and as the result to show the one greatest truth they teach or to deepen the impression they together make.

(*b*) **Classify the people** named in the lessons, and show their relation to the kingdom of God.

(*c*) **Tell briefly the connected story,** asking questions as you go, to bring out names or facts or teachings, so that the school shall help in the reconstruction.

(*d*) **Distribute questions previously written** on slips of paper among the scholars. At the review let these questions be asked. This may serve to encourage to a more thorough and general study. It must be brightly conducted, as must any review or any teaching indeed to hold the interest of all.

The secret of an interesting review is first to bring out what is familiar in new combinations, and then to bring out of that something which is not familiar or expected.

4. **Written reviews** are being used more and more widely. These are the most thorough of all by far. The question papers are to be distributed a week before the Review Sunday and filled out at home, from memory if possible; if not, from the Bible. The public review is to be based on them, and those successfully passing are to receive a certificate, which by seals of four different colors is good for a year.

The last question has been often made personal, as "Do you want to be a Christian?" The answers to these have opened the way in many cases for personal conversation, and have led to a public confession of Christ.

A Chicago superintendent gives the following testimony to their value:

"We claim for the review papers: —

"1. They excite more interest in the study of the lesson.

"2. They prompt home Bible study; not only by the scholars, but also by the family.

"3. They are brought into many non-church-going families by the scholars: the questions are read, and in many cases

fathers and mothers become interested in the lessons and thus study the Bible.

"4. By studying the questions asked, and afterward writing the answer, the truths of the lesson are more fully impressed upon the mind.

"5. By the reviews and answers given, many scholars are led to make a public confession of their belief.

"With us, Review Sunday is the most interesting and helpful Sunday-school session we have, always having more than an average attendance."

CHAPTER XII.

Sunday-school Music.

Its object. The use of music in the Sunday-school as in the church, in theory at least, is for the expression or for the impression of Christian sentiments. It is not intended to teach truth, but to stir or voice feeling. It should not, therefore, be didactic or doctrinal. It should express the emotions which are based on Christian truth, and sometimes, perhaps, the purpose to which those awakened feelings lead.

Its themes. Praise for God's goodness, thanks for his care and grace, prayer for his continued guidance, trust in his fatherly love, hope based on his gracious promises, consecration to his service: these are the themes which must naturally find expression in sacred song.

1. **The hymns** expressing these feelings should for all uses be **simple in expression.** Indeed the hundred hymns that have lived longest and been used by the largest number have been so both in thought and language. Such hymns as "My faith looks up to thee" and "Jesus, lover of my soul" have no intricacies of thought or of expression, no elaborate figures, and no unusual words. This should be especially true of hymns for Sunday-school use. For, while this department of the church is not meant for children only, yet it is so largely composed of the young that it would be folly to disregard them.

They should be equally **simple in sentiment.** The Sunday-school song collection should include the hymns of universal Christian experience like those referred to above.

They should be hymns of average, not of the maturest, experience. They should not dwell much on earthly trials or on heavenly joys, as too many of those used in the past have done. These are neither the experiences nor the anticipations of youth. They should rather be glad and hopeful and concerned largely with the faith and hope and love which mark the life of the Christian in this world. They should embody not childish but childlike sentiments. They should not be strained to a high pitch of feeling, but should be adapted to those whose religious feelings, like their experiences, are not the deepest. They should be such hymns as we sing at home, rather than those that would be appropriate to the revival meeting.

It is well frequently, though not too often, to **call attention to the sentiment** of the hymn; sometimes to read a hymn in alternate verses or in unison with the school. Do not let the meaning of the service be forgotten.

2. **The tunes** are, or ought to be, the fitting embodiment of the hymns.

(1) They too, then, should be simple and joyous; but they should **not be frivolous.** They should not suggest a jig or a waltz. Music "which stirs the heels more than the heart" is out of place in the house of God. If such music has any effect, it is in appealing to the physical rather than to the mental or spiritual nature. It is akin to the hand-rubbing and shouting which still attend the religious exercises of some uneducated sects. It is exciting long before it is religious, if not long after.

(2) The tunes **should aid the words** in exciting or expressing religious emotion or in deepening those quiet feelings of trust and peace which belong to the Christian life. They must be born of religious feeling to be able to awaken it. There is a middle ground between the old, staid, solemn tunes,

more fitted to didactic hymns than to those of emotion, and which are, therefore, to be discarded, and the flippant, rollicking, happy-go-lucky jig music to which too many Sunday-schools turn for relief.

Tunes in marching time are both animated and serious and are well adapted to this use. Many English chorals sung with animation and in quick time are both dignified and enlivening. A Sunday-school should be familiar with the hymns and tunes which are oftenest used in the public worship of the church and in the singing of the home. They should be used with sufficient frequency to insure such familiarity.

3. **The rendering of the hymns and tunes** thus united should be in the **spirit of worship**. Those who take part should be instructed that the sacrifice of praise is to be as reverently offered as that of prayer. They should be led, then, with Christian feeling and by one in sympathy with the sentiments expressed. Their attention must be called frequently to the words used, so that they will not think only or mainly of the melody sung. Every one has felt the difference between the singing of some hymn by one whose whole heart went into its feeling and one whose voice only uttered the words. If such a devout leader cannot be had, at least let there be no trifling with this service.

Practicing and praising. The difference between practicing music and singing hymns as worship should be clearly drawn. If there is to be a time for the former, let it be distinctly set forth as such. Let it be understood even in this that it is practice as a preparation for praise. When the singing as part of the school service begins, let it be clearly part of the worship. The melody of the heart is more acceptable to God than all possible harmonies of the voice.

4. **Dependence on the chorister.** The singing of the school, if it is large enough to carry any music strongly, can be made very much what an enthusiastic leader desires. If he

believes that the only animated singing is of jig music, of course he will drag and drone on anything besides that. If, on the other hand, **his** own **musical taste** and spiritual perception approve heartily of what is more strictly musical and devotional, he will impress his feeling upon the school, and will lead them not only in the matter of tunes but of taste. The better the chorister, the better the singing and the better the songs sung.

A caution. On the other hand it would not be well for a leader of refined taste to insist on forcing music on any school which was distasteful to it. He must lead them gradually up. And if they cannot be led far, he may at least keep them on the upper levels of the music of their choice. Sacrifice good taste at any time for the higher end of using what will both express and impress religious feeling. The end is of far more consequence than the means.

Quite as important as his appreciation of good music is **his** response to the **Christian sentiments** in the expression of which he is leading the school. If these pervade him, they will know it; if these are utterly lacking, he cannot lead them where he does not go.

How to learn a new tune. The melody is far more important than the harmony in the singing of a congregation. If a school would all unite in singing the melody, that is, the air, of a new tune, and continue to do so until it had become perfectly familiar to them, there would not be so much impatience and criticism of music of a higher order. After this familiarity has been gained, then let those who can do it well and easily take up the other parts, being sure that enough of the more powerful voices remain upon the melody to sustain it strongly and make it still the leading part. A beautiful theme stays in the memory, makes its impression on the heart, and often fixes words and sentiments in the memory.

CHAPTER XIII.

Sunday-school Records.

1. **The Class Record** should be kept by each teacher. Attendance and punctuality are most important matters to be marked and discriminated. Attendance at the public service of the church may be encouraged by making note of it for each scholar on the class book. The fact of a contribution to the Sunday-school collection should also be entered. It is perhaps a question whether it is best for the teacher to note the amount given by each scholar. Unless all are similarly situated as to means or command of money, it is certainly not a fair basis of comparison. Except in a few extreme cases, each one can give something. Great care should be taken that the appeal to give be made to the highest motives, and not to the lower ones of emulation or regard for appearances, and that the poorest should not be made ashamed of the little they can do.

The value of these records is that the teacher may know the facts and may be reminded of the duties which grow out of them: for example, looking up those who have been absent, inducing those who neglect the service of the church to regular attendance, and training all to take some part in the support or charities of the school.

2. **The Executive Committee Records.** If there is such a committee entrusted with some charge of the school or holding an advisory relation to it, its meetings and proceedings should be carefully recorded by themselves. It is not important or advisable that this should cover all the things which

they discuss, but the motions which they adopt and the recommendations which they make to the school should be thus carefully preserved.

3. **The School Records** should be the most complete of all. They should **begin with the organization** of the school: the preliminary steps, the fact and process of organization, the first officers elected, with careful lists of the original teachers and pupils — all should be preserved. The interest with which the early entries are referred to, those schools or churches which have come to their twenty-fifth or fiftieth anniversaries can testify.

There should be a carefully kept **register** of **officers, teachers,** and **scholars,** with the date of the beginning of their membership, and its termination where that has taken place. The residence and names of the parents of each minor should be entered. The reception of scholars to the church, or the fact of their church membership, the reason for their withdrawal from the school, and any important fact in their later history, will greatly add to the value of this register.

The Records should contain minutes of the Annual Meetings, of the election of officers, of any votes or resolutions passed by the teachers or the school.

A record should be kept by the secretary of the attendance for each Sunday, with a statement of the average for the quarter and the year.

Either by copying it from the class books or, in a small school, by marking it directly, the individual attendance of teachers and scholars should be entered on the school Record. Without this there can be no accurate supervision of the teachers and no personal knowledge of the scholar's regularity and work. In some way this should always be secured.

4. **The Financial Record.** Wherever money is handled, especially in a religious organization, it should be carefully

accounted for. The receipts and expenses, the collections and charities should be kept to the last cent.

If the church elects the superintendent and supports the school, the appropriation which it makes for this purpose is usually paid over to him. With his annual report to it, he accounts for its receipt and use and his account is duly audited.

If the school provides for its own support, the money goes into the hands of its treasurer, and it is best that he should make his report to the school, and that they should by accepting approve it.

Whoever has charge of the money, the secretary should keep the record of the weekly offerings and of all the votes of the school in regard to the disbursement of its funds. It is an additional assurance that all will be carefully and accurately done.

5. **Qualities of a Good Secretary.** All this is the duty of the secretary, who should have the qualities of a good bookkeeper. He should be accurate, orderly, and neat. He should realize that he is an aid to the superintendent. He should avoid being fussy or making too much of his office. If he can add to these requisites a personal interest in the scholars and in the spiritual welfare of the school, he is in the best training to make a first-class superintendent. In a large school a secretary can either be found or trained. In a small school the superintendent can perhaps fulfill the duties of this office himself.

6. **Use of the Records.** Whoever may make or keep these records should remember that they are not for the sake of the book or even of the secretary. They are first of all for the use of **the superintendent.** They will be of little value unless he examines them from time to time, or unless the important facts recorded are communicated to him promptly. He is the one to be kept informed of the coming

of new scholars (they should be reported to him before they take their seats in any class), and of irregular teachers or absentees. On the basis of this information, he is to inquire into the absences of his teachers and to see that they do the same with regard to their absentee scholars. He should be as faithful in looking after his teachers as he expects them to be in looking after their classes.

In large schools where there are missionary or **visiting committees,** the information should go from the superintendent to them and they should report to him.

The pastor should examine these Records from time to time. He too should know the facts both as to teachers and scholars, their regularity, fidelity, and efficiency. They are all part of his charge, and either in person or through others he should care for them.

It is an excellent and interesting thing to have **a scrap-book** in which all programs, notices from the newspapers, or articles prepared and read by members of the school shall be kept. With a little care valuable history can be preserved in this way.

In some schools **certificates** of membership are given to those who unite with the school, and letters of dismission to those who leave it. This is of value mainly in places where there is a rapidly changing population. These of course it is the care of the secretary to give and receive.

CHAPTER XIV.

Sunday-school Literature.

I. LESSON HELPS.

We have referred elsewhere to the various ideas of Sunday-school teaching which have successively prevailed. It is not necessary here to speak again of the past. The International system of lessons has stimulated the preparation of a great number of valuable aids to their study. All of the larger denominations of Christians have their publishing houses, which to a great extent supply the wants of their own schools; and private individuals in coöperation with enterprising publishers have entered into competition with them. The field is large and there is room in it, if not for all, at least for many.

It would not be proper or politic in this place to make criticisms or comparisons. The question of importance is, What are the general principles by which such helps should be selected? It is perhaps not out of place here to say a word on the question of **denominational loyalty**. It seems reasonable that the authorized agency of a denomination should have at least the "benefit of the doubt" when the question arises, "Whom shall we patronize?" The endorsement of an organized body of churches ought to be equal to the claims of any individual for recognition, even if it be supported by a few or many others. The fact that the profits belong to the denomination is worthy to be considered in the business aspect. And yet this is all that can be asked or claimed, that the churches help their own agency when they can do it without

loss to their own schools; and this further, that they aid their own agency with kindly advice and criticism, rather than try to destroy it by unbrotherly censure and substitution.

What are **the tests of good Sunday-school helps?** How shall we know what are the best?

1. **They should stimulate.** A proper help is not a crutch, but a vaulting pole. It should not make our step shorter or less firm, but more elastic and far-reaching. Rather, it is not a substitute for work, but a better tool to work with. It should not be an inducement to laziness, but an incentive to industry.

They should therefore **not** be **merely mechanical.** A set of questions which can all be answered from the consecutive sentences of the text is not stimulating. It is still worse if the answers are printed with the questions. It may give a valuable inventory of the contents of a given passage; but there is no glow in an index.

They should **not** be **too simple,** nor all within the easy reach of every fairly bright scholar. Some questions should be so easy that the wayfaring pupil, even though he were a dullard, need not err therein; but others should lead the student on into unexplored regions by no means desert or devoid of beauty. Some sections of them should be confessedly a little beyond the average ability of the grade for which they are prepared. It is that which requires effort which stimulates. Helps should compel some study from all, and should invite much study from many.

They should open up the lesson and not close it. They should have windows opening out on every side, from which the landscapes of the Word, with their sunrises of splendor and sunsets of promise, should be seen. Mere pellets of instruction swallowed at a gulp are better for medicine than for food. The best help is that which most acts as a tonic on

the appetite for heavenly truth, stirs the mind, quickens the curiosity, and sets one on to seek as for hidden treasure.

2. **They should instruct.** It is not enough to set the Bible before the unpracticed youth or older ones, and bid them learn. It is not so that we begin to study any of the varied books of nature. You do not take your boy whom you desire should gain a correct idea of astronomy, and say to him, "Study the starry heavens." For fifteen centuries since the star at Bethlehem "came and stood over where the young child was," and for at least four times as many centuries before, wise men had been studying the heavens in vain. Would you put each boy back where Adam was in his knowledge of the world? On the other hand, you give him in general the results of all the right ideas to which his generation is the heir, and from that vantage ground he makes advance. Induction is the way to learn for the advanced student, after he has mastered the learning of the ancients. It is part of every best system of helps, but not the whole.

An equally important work is to **impart information** which is yours but not yet your pupil's. There are many expressions in the Scripture which are meaningless to him, unless some man shall guide him who knows more than he. What does he know of "the course of Abijah," or "the generations of Adam," or a hundred other things which need a word of explanation? Let him dig? Yes; but better dig with him as you would with your boy if he were going a-fishing, and point him out the worms turned up by your spade.

Give information as to facts, and **instruction as to principles,** and give just enough to increase the healthful stimulus. The best helps will both inform and instruct in the contents of the lesson, beyond the lesson, and in the things both leading to it and out of it. Ambition is increased by attainment as well as by the sight of difficulties to be overcome. The consciousness of progress is a sharp spur to progress.

3. **They should edify.** To build character is the worthiest work in the world; and whatever may be said of the importance of quickening the mind or of feeding it, it is more important than either that the heart and will be set right. **The Bible is a guidebook** more than it is a book of history or of doctrine; for all these are but to illustrate or define the way in which we should go. The Bible is the most practical of books; it bids us see and know, but it tells us how and where to go. Pilate says, "Behold the man!" but Jesus says, "Come unto me."

The best helps, then, will be **Scriptural:** they will hold to the very Word of God; this is the food by which we live. Nothing which leads away from the Bible will be permanently helpful. We do not mean from the whole sixty-six books bound in one volume, but from its sacred and life-giving contents.

It is not always **the traditional reading** or interpretation either in which the real Word is found. It may be in the Revised Version or in its marginal reading, to which many of the best translations of the Revision have been consigned. The meaning of Scripture is Scripture; whatever help leads most directly to that is best.

Such a help will never be **fanciful.** It will never turn illustrations into types. It will be content with the Scripture use of Scripture in regard to all such matters. It will not find the divine sacrifice in Rahab's scarlet thread, but will be content to see it on Calvary. The truest reverence for Scripture will not allow itself to insert its own notions into its meaning, or to confound its own inferences with the declarations of the Spirit.

The best help will also be **spiritual.** It will sympathize with the spiritual truths of the Word and with its spiritual aim. It will give evidence of prayer in its preparation. It will be evidently directed to effecting the highest religious advancement of those for whom it is prepared. It will have about it

that atmosphere of reverence, that recognition of God's presence in his Word, that attitude of expectancy as to its effect on human hearts, which betray the secret of its power. Without this sympathy and aim and atmosphere there can be but little impartation of spiritual life.

II. THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL LIBRARY.

Its importance. While it is not the main purpose of the Sunday-school to furnish general or even religious reading to its members, yet, in these days of many books, it may serve an important end by providing that some of the best books shall be within their reach. There are a few pastors who rejoice that there is no library in their school, but these of course must be taking some vigorous measures in other ways to influence the reading in the homes of their charge and among the young people especially. Most pastors and superintendents consider their work incomplete unless they are able not only to recommend but to furnish good books for home reading.

Two kinds of libraries. What shall these books be? The answer depends much upon the community, upon what they have at command from other sources, upon the need to be met. We should lay down this general rule: Where there are many books in the homes, — of travel, of history, of biography, of fiction, — and where periodical literature abounds as well, or where there are public libraries stored with all these kinds of books, and easily accessible, the Sunday-school library should be strictly confined to books for Sunday reading. It is in this department that scarcity is more likely to exist than in any other. In communities where, on the other hand, the homes are scantily supplied and there are no treasure houses of literature open to all, the selection for the

Sunday-school library may well be somewhat wider in its range. It should, in this case, be clearly set forth that all these books are not intended or recommended for Sunday reading, but for the home, to be used with conscience and discrimination. Here, the best history, biography, travel, and fiction which have a distinctly elevating character and purpose may be mingled more liberally with those books which are prepared with especial reference to the spiritual needs of the Sunday-school.

The old stigma out of date. Here let us note that the ancient and sometime deserved stigma which used to attach to Sunday-school books has ceased to be appropriate. Those who use it nowadays are probably thinking of the experience of their early years, and have not noticed the great improvement here which has kept pace with that in other juvenile literature. It would be absurd to try to compare the delightful books and periodicals of our day — charming in matter not only, but in literary style and artistic decoration — with stories crudely written or coarsely printed and illustrated. The best publishers of Sunday-school books demand that the characters introduced should be lifelike, should talk in natural ways, and not "like a book"; that they should be interesting, whether representing historical or fictitious characters; that the English should be strong and good in style, and that the moral should be interwoven with the story and not inserted in special paragraphs of preachment or appended like the application of a sermon. There are many such books adapted for the Sunday-school library to-day.

1. **What a Library should Contain.** A good library should contain **books which help in the study** and understanding **of the Bible,** on Bible lands and characters and times; books which are helpful toward or **in the Christian life** (there are times when these are needed and when they

will be read; they should be at hand); books of **biography,** of good men and true Christians and the heroes of missions at home and abroad, written by those who are in sympathy with their characters and purposes. From this last source comes some of the best inspiration to noble living.

2. The library should include **histories of important periods in the Christian Church**: for example, the first three centuries and the Reformation. There are valuable books on these subjects not too bulky or too heavy for the interest of intelligent young people. We have but little liking for that mixture of history and fiction which is called **historical fiction.** It is the most difficult kind of writing and is rarely, though it is occasionally, successful in illuminating the obscure places of the past. If the historical element predominates, the real history is far better; if the fiction is too conspicuous, it obscures the facts, and at the best the real and the imaginary personages become strangely confused in the mind of the reader. A few books of this class are of real value.

3. The library, after all effort has been made to include in it books of the classes which have been already named, will probably be composed of a large majority of **books of fiction.** Scarcely a generation ago such books were condemned for a place in these, if not in all, libraries for young people. Our own Publishing Society for many years refused to print books which even combined in one narrative real events gathered from various sources, as not according to the truth. That sentence has been removed, and it is granted that fiction may set before us characters which are models of excellence and teach lessons of virtue which are attractive and inspiring. Books of this class should be written in good literary style, and should be inspired with the highest motives to claim a place upon the shelves of our Sunday-school libraries. The conversations should be natural, and the char-

acters should explain themselves and not need the author to stand visibly by with a pointer to indicate which is which or of what kind.

If they have anything to do with such love as results naturally in marriage, — and the less it is made conspicuous the better, — it should be the principle rather than the sentiment of love. The thrills and emotions should be omitted. The trust and respect on which true love is based are always elevating.

The test of a book of any of these classes is not a page or a sentence here and there, but the general impression it makes for brightness or for dullness, for good or for evil.

It is worth saying here, that it does no good to buy books for a circulating library that will not circulate. No matter how good they may be, they cannot exert a good influence if they stay on the shelf. On the other hand, the library, whether connected with the church or the town, should be **above** rather than quite down to the level of **the tastes of the readers.** It should have an elevating influence always on them. If you can get the readers of dime novels to enjoy a fiction which is pure and unexciting, you have made a most important step. How the library may be made to aid in this will be suggested under the title of The Librarian.

The choice of the books. There should ordinarily be **a Library Committee,** of which the librarian and superintendent should be members, whose duty it should be to select the best books for use by the school. The principles of selection have been in general already given. The composition of this committee will have more to do with the result than any mere statement of principles. They should be of course: (1) people of high Christian character; (2) of good literary discernment; (3) of sympathy with the younger readers.

The best way to select books for a general library is the way one would add to his own store of books — little by little. And

yet we do not generally read a book through before buying it for ourselves. We judge largely by the subject and the author and in some cases by the publisher.

Often it happens that a large addition must be made at one time. Then it is best to **depend chiefly on previous careful examination made by others.** This is better than a hasty examination by those who are not accustomed to the art of criticism. The Congregational Sunday-School and Publishing Society have the new books of all publishers examined by trained critics, and those examinations are verified by a sufficient review in the editorial department, before they are added to the list of approved books kept in stock or sent out for the use or selection of school committees. Not more than one in ten of the books thus examined are approved. The value of this sifting process to our schools is very great, and it is usually quite safe to rely upon the judgments thus reached.

The Librarian. Next to the selection of the best books, more depends upon the proper choice of a librarian and upon his competency and efficiency than all besides. If the superintendent is the school, the librarian is the library.

The worst choice which is often made for this office is to appoint some young man or older boy, perhaps mainly to keep him in some connection with the school, perhaps because he is a difficult pupil to manage. It is a good way for a teacher to secure the aid of such a scholar, to give him some responsibility and so gain his coöperation. But this is by far too important an interest of the school to be sacrificed for such a purpose. Especially where the library is in a separate room and all the time of the school is occupied in its duties, it too often becomes a lounging place for gossip and irreverent talking, and sometimes flirting. These young men or women are the very ones whom it is most important to have under the best teachers and the best teaching.

Another bad choice for the office is to fill it with some one too dull to teach, who can only fulfill the mechanical and clerical duties of the place. You may by such a person have the books most neatly kept and covered and most accurately charged; these are excellent things to be done, but they are of much less importance than other duties which are not so often considered.

The proper person for librarian. What kind of a person, then, should be put in charge of the books? We answer, The most spiritual and most intelligent person in the school, and one who knows and is interested in the individual scholars as well. If there is one good man or woman who combines these qualities, put that one in this place. But you need all such for teachers? That is true; then let such an one have general charge, and let the mere work of returning and giving out and charging books be done by some one who has this competence but not the other. Distinguish between a librarian and a library clerk.

The true function of a librarian. It is just in this regard that the highest function of the model librarian lies. He will be far more than a mere library clerk. He will know the books in his care; he will read them so as to be familiar with their style and contents. Then, he will know the teachers and pupils in the school; will learn something about their habits and opportunities of reading and their mental and spiritual needs, and on the basis of this knowledge he will try to adapt the one to the other. He will suggest this book to this boy, and that one to that teacher, having regard to the tastes as well as the wants of each. He will talk over a book occasionally with some reader, to see if he has gotten at its spirit and value, and, by indicating the important points, will teach him how to read. Every well-conducted public library nowadays has regard to such ability for advice on the part of

those in charge. Of what exceeding importance such a use of the office can be in a Sunday-school who can tell?

The library clerk. There are other duties which go with the office, or which may be done under its direction, which are merely mechanical and clerical. These are important in their place and essential to the preservation of the books, as books and as a library. Neatness and order are indispensable here, and a certain persistency **to keep the books in their order and in their integrity** requires patience and ingenuity. A little judicious use of glue often keeps a book from untimely dissolution: it atones in some measure for the original sin of the binder.

A careful method of **charging books** to those who draw them out is needful. Any method is good which enables the library clerk to tell readily who is responsible for a certain book and how long that person has had it in possession. A card deposited in the place of the book does it, or a tag hung over its place in the library, if the date is put on the card or tag. Probably, after all, the best way is to use a book and a pen or pencil. The best arrangement of the book is to give a column to each numbered book and place the scholar's number in the space for the Sunday when the book is drawn. This enables one to trace the book most easily, and to know who took it and when, and to credit its return by checking off the scholar's number. A simple card for the scholar, with his library number conspicuously at its head, with his name and class also upon it, and the numbers of the books from which he wishes one, completes the outfit.

Library catalogues, if sufficiently complete, are of value; but a mere list of titles and numbers is of little use. The books should be classified, the books for the primary and younger classes separated, and the catalogue should contain some brief description of the book or of its intent, with the

name of the author. For example, "A story of the Crusades," or "For older Girls," "For young Christians," "A volume of Travel," etc. Often the names are of no more significance than the numbers, and it is a mere lottery whether the book will at all fit the reader or not. In this case the library card is a mere lottery ticket.

The teacher and the library. After all that has been said as to the nature of the highest duties of the librarian in knowing the books and knowing the readers and adapting the one to the other, it is still true that no one person, whatever his official position may be, can do this without aid. It is the privilege and duty of every teacher to know what his scholars are reading, and to do all he can to guide them in their choice and use of books. The teacher's work is not merely to test his pupils as to their knowledge of a given lesson, or even to stimulate them to more thorough study. He is concerned in everything which tends to the formation of intelligent Christian character in each of them. Among these influences he cannot ignore that of the books they read.

Let him then find out what they are using for mental food; whether it be wholesome bread and meat, or candies only, or even poisons. He can do this for his half dozen scholars, as the librarian cannot for the whole school. Let him lead them on to enjoy better books, consulting with the librarian and entering with him into this matter with all his wisdom and tact. A good teacher with a good librarian, if they have a good library at their disposal, can together accomplish much in this direction.

A teachers' library is a most valuable adjunct to any Sunday-school. It should contain cyclopædias, Bible dictionaries, commentaries, descriptions of places and travel, anything indeed that may throw light upon the Land and the Book, and books of doctrine or experience which may enable the

reader to see more clearly Him who is the Light of the World.

III. OTHER LITERATURE.

We have named the three sections of this chapter in the order of their importance. To have the best helps to the study of the Bible is first, of course. To provide elevating Christian books for home reading comes next. Besides these, there are other aids which are of value varying according to the place and condition of the school.

Sunday-school papers have their place. A good paper of this order, either for youths, children, or little ones, is good anywhere and always. Of course it is especially appreciated and of peculiar importance where this is the only printed sheet whose tone is elevated morally or which has religious character that finds entrance to the homes of the people.

Such a paper should convey **Christian and moral truth.** It should hold up a high ideal to old and young in its editorial paragraphs and in the articles which illustrate the manly and the Christian life by incident. Its aim should be to discover and to foster the religious element (often hidden but always there) in the hearts of its readers. Many shy young Christians may be helped by the earnest and wisely directed efforts of the Sunday-school paper, who can be approached as well by nothing else. It should set out to aid young Christians in the beginnings of the new life, and should not forget to have a few words of comfort or of counsel for the older ones into whose hands it may fall.

With these suggestions as to its contents we need only say of its manner that it should be **vivacious.** There is nothing which repels young people more than that which is dull and lifeless. And yet it is not necessary to avoid being serious in order to be full of life. It need not let down its literary

standard; it need not degenerate into slang; it certainly need not be flippant to be vivacious. Indeed it can hardly be this without being earnest and urgent.

As to its **material form**, it should be on good paper, with illustrations which are really artistic and with clear and attractive type. It is demoralizing to make the vehicles of our religious thought and teaching mean and unworthy in their form. The association is bad and harmful. Rather it ought to be with all that is elevating in every way, so that the very name of a paper which comes thus from the church into the home makes a suggestion of pleasure to the eye as well as to the mind. Do not let us cheapen our religious literature too much lest it make religion itself seem in another sense a cheap thing.

As to papers for the **little ones**, all that has been said above is true. This suggestion only needs to be added: there should be no picture and no sentence on their pages which does not appeal directly to the intelligence of those for whom they are prepared. No simple mother reading to her little child at home ought to be compelled to translate any part of it all into simpler words. It is strange how few writers for children remember always the narrow range of both the thoughts and the words in which the youngest readers can move freely.

CHAPTER XV.

Finances and Charities.

I. FINANCES.

Finances of a church school. I have already set forth the duty of the church to put the support of its own Sunday-school on the same basis with its provision for its preaching and prayer-meeting service. If it is able to provide amply for these, it should devise equally liberal things for that. If it must exercise a severe economy in regard to its pulpit and its building, let it set up the same, but no more, rigid limits to its expenditure for its Sunday-school. In every case of a church school, let its expenses be paid from the common treasury, to which, if it be necessary, the school may contribute. This principle, I believe, should be applied without exception. All good parents do this in the education of their children: so does the state; shall the Church of Jesus Christ be the only organization which does not regard its children as belonging to the household?

As to other than church schools, — branch, mission, pioneer, or union schools, — there can be no general rule laid down. **So far as possible, the community in which they exist should support them.** In some cases those scholars who can afford to do it should be expected to pay each the few cents each quarter which the lesson help costs. In other cases, where the people are in extreme poverty, or where they must be taught to appreciate the school, every-

thing must be provided for a time without cost. But every community should be encouraged to support its own religious work as soon as it is able. People easily become helpless who are helped too much or too long. That is valued more highly and used more faithfully which costs something.

What money should be spent for. A school should be as fully equipped for its actual work as is consistent with a wise economy. Every school ought to have a good map of Palestine and of the Bible lands, a blackboard, a sufficient supply of Bibles for those who cannot bring their own, of hymn books for all, and of lesson helps graded to meet the needs of the various classes and scholars.

A little ingenuity and patience can supply these first at very slight cost. Almost any one can enlarge a map from those given in the Quarterlies, by marking the small map and a large sheet into corresponding squares. A map may be drawn on a large sheet of manilla paper with black ink or red, which will sufficiently show the location of the leading lands, seas, and cities of the Bible history.

A blackboard can be made at small expense, or the flexible blackboard cloth can be bought cheaply. Charts with names of kings or prophets, and dates, or with the years and events of the life of Christ or of the Apostolic Church, may be easily made on a sheet of muslin with stencil plates or hand lettering.

The poorest place for economy is on the lesson helps. Much of the value of the whole work of the school depends upon the quality of these and the direction they give to study. We have tried elsewhere to indicate the criteria by which they may be judged. We can only say here: Get the best — not always the most expensive, never the cheapest, but the most helpful in their contents, and these so well printed and illustrated as to secure respect.

II. CHARITIES.

The object of the Sunday-school is not merely to impart knowledge of the Bible, but to cultivate Christian character. As a stream shapes the banks through which it flows, so spending and giving money form character. This means of education should not be neglected, nor should it be treated carelessly: it is worthy of serious consideration.

It has **an important bearing on the accomplishment of Christian missionary work.** The gifts of the children, and the comparatively small gifts of the older ones which go through the Sunday-school treasury aggregate a large sum. Our Congregational Sunday-schools reported in the Year-Book for 1890 charities amounting to $144,000, and it is not probable that the whole amount thus given was reported. Only three of our seven national societies received more than that amount during that year in contributions from the living; and this sum was fully equal to that received by three of the others together. Surely if the gifts of the Sunday-schools amount to so much as this, they should be wisely encouraged and directed.

But even more important than this is **the influence in training the Christian givers of the future.** What the intelligent liberality of the next generation of Christian men and women will be depends largely upon the interest which is awakened in them, and the habits of coöperation which they learn now.

It is well to remember too that many of the young in our Sunday-schools come from homes not otherwise attached to the church, that all their Christian training is received here, and that if they receive any education in this matter of Christian giving, it must be from this source.

1. **Wrong and right motives.** The good of giving to

the giver depends upon the motive. In the training, then, great care should be exercised to keep out unworthy motives and to give prominence to the highest.

Emulation should never be appealed to. The scholar or the class which gives the largest sum should not be publicly or privately commended merely for that. Liberality is to be judged not by the amount that is given, but by what is left; or by a comparison of what is given with what is spent on self. It is good to encourage the participation of all, but the measure should be the ability of each.

Still less should scholars be **shamed** into giving, or allowed to feel a sense of disgrace because they can do nothing or much less than others. This is in many cases sheer cruelty.

The motive to be appealed to is **Christian love.** That is the very meaning of the word charity; and these gifts should be so far as possible gifts of love: of love to God for his unspeakable gift and for all the good he does us; of love which seeks to please him by helping on the work which is most on his heart; of love for all our Father's children who lack our opportunities and especially our gospel.

2. **The method** should be **intelligent.** It should involve *a careful selection of objects.* This can best be done by a committee, either the Executive Committee of the school or a special committee on charities. The school should know that the objects recommended are of real need, and are thoroughly understood by those who approve them. They should be so clearly stated that their nature can be comprehended.

It is important that **the school should know at the time for what its offerings are being given.** A good plan is to place the object upon the blackboard or upon a chart, where it may be seen during the time it is being aided. This is far better than to give oh week after week and then vote away the money already raised. There is more interest

in giving this sum for that object than for general charities. There is far more opportunity for education in it and for keeping the object definitely before the scholars' minds. There is likely to be a greater effort made for a particular cause than for a general work. On all accounts keep clearly before the school the object for which the offering of each week is made: let it be an offering to the Lord and for some special and understood need.

(*a*) Children especially need to have before them **some concrete case.** If their money can go to establish or to aid some Sunday-school in a destitute community, at home or in a foreign field, and they can hear of the joy it carries and the help it gives, that makes the whole matter of giving real to them. They know then that it is not to pay their teachers that they are asked to give. Their sympathies are called forth toward those of whom they hear.

(*b*) But they ought not to be always confined to giving for a definite place; still less to the aid of particular individuals. Institutions are more safe to give to than either. As soon as possible after this preliminary training, turn the offerings of the children to **the work of an individual missionary.** Get them to be interested in all that he does, in the progress of his whole field. By occasional letters he can lead them on to understand better, and so to be more interested in the larger work.

(*c*) And then let your school graduate into that wider giving in which the church participates, by contributing to **our national societies.**

This training to intelligent giving cannot well follow these steps in merely a succession of time. They can best be done together. Once or twice a year let some specific case make its appeal. The remainder of the time let the general wants of our great home and foreign fields receive aid. In this way you

reach all classes and increase the intelligence both as to particular places and more general work.

Remember that knowledge is necessary to love, and intelligence comes by instruction. It is not enough to put our money into an envelope or box, and know that it is to be devoted to some good object. The object should always be definite, whether the money goes to a specific field or to the general work of an organization. Those who give should be informed so that they may know what their money is to help.

Locate the places where help is to go on a map. Procure pictures if possible. Tell incidents connected with it. Try in every way to make the place, the need, and the work definite and clear.

Love follows knowledge. It cannot precede it. Special concern and sympathy flow out toward those whose needs we know and whose relief we see. And love for God and for his kingdom increases as we come to see the need of his grace, and the righteousness and peace and joy which follow where the knowledge and love of him are extended.

3. **Giving One's Own Money.** It is important that all who give should make **an offering of that which costs them something** — of that which is their own. It is not giving, simply to be the agent for transferring money from the parental to the Sunday-school treasury; that is, it is surely not the giving of the transfer agent. It is the parent who is the giver. In order that children may offer of their own, they must have something of their own to offer. This must depend mainly on the parent. We believe it is best in a home where there is enough for comfortable living for each child to have an allowance, on the condition that they will keep a careful account of its expenditure, or that they regularly render some helpful service to the household. Where this cannot be done,

there should be some opportunity to earn a little money from parents or from others. The giving of the child should be altogether from this fund which is at its own disposal, so that it shall mean the foregoing of some indulgence or the preferring this to some other use of his money.

In many cases what is called the **Talent System** has been used with remarkable results. Some one has given each scholar who would take it a cent or a nickel and they have been asked to use their ingenuity to increase that capital and bring back the proceeds at a given time. The interest awakened, the generous rivalry stimulated, the satisfaction of returning the amount with its increase has been great, and the ingenuity of the plans and their carrying out have been most pleasing.

4. Some part of the giving of every one should be **systematic.** Where the allowance or the earnings are regular, a pledge may be made of so much each week. The habit thus formed is much better than the occasional and spasmodic giving of most people. Paul's plan was a laying aside on the first day of each week, as the Lord had prospered each one, that when he should come to receive their offerings there should be no gathering, that having all been done before. The results of a weekly offering where all participate are usually larger by a good deal than the amounts given in answer to appeals.

5. **The giving may** and **ought to be dignified** by those who manage it. It ought never to be called the penny collection. That makes it a small matter, and suggests a small measure of giving. Call it the **offering,** make it an act of service to God; in the prayers of the school ask God to bless it and the object which it is to aid, and somehow set it before the school as an important part of their work. In the primary department sometimes the children march and sing as they make their offering, dropping their gifts in the box as they

pass by. In the more advanced departments the class envelope is commonly used. Whatever the plan, it should be in the mind of both teacher and superintendent to make the giving a real and a worthy offering to the Lord.

Giving is worship. Giving is worship if the motive of it be the right one. It is a prayer for the coming of the kingdom of God. Among the spoken petitions of every session of the school, there should be one for generous hearts open to the needs of others, for the Lord's acceptance of the offering of the day, and for his blessing upon its use in his service.

Possibly **some cautions** are needed here.

1. **Distinguish between Expenses and Charities.** A careful distinction should be made between what is raised for the expenses of the Sunday-school and the offering for charitable purposes. Never, under any circumstances, should money raised for charity be appropriated to home expenses. It is a dishonesty and teaches dishonesty to the children. Nor is it wise, while it may not be dishonest, to raise money for both purposes at once, from which the home wants shall first be met and the remainder given away. It tends to confuse two entirely distinct acts. It leads to unnecessary expenditure often at home, and to the use of a larger proportion of the available funds than was intended by the donors. Always let the school know what it is raising money for and let it know in advance.

2. **Difference between Church and Sunday-school Giving.** We believe most heartily that every church should contribute to our seven denominational missionary societies; in even the poorest of them we would have the opportunity given. But we are not so sure that it is wise to urge every Sunday-school to give to all of these, at least every year. We should have more regard to training than to the amount given. We cannot expect the children and young people to assume all the

responsibilities of those of mature age. We would teach the children the names, the initials, and the objects of each of the national societies, using the Home Missionary Society's star or printing the initials of the same on a chart to be always in sight of the school. There are certain of these which have a special claim from the nature of their work. And for a specialty which has the strongest claim on the sympathy and support of our Sunday-schools, we would keep before them our own Sunday-school missionary work for at least 10,000,000 of the children and youth who are growing up in our own land without the institutions of the gospel.

3. **Do not Scatter Too Much.** Some cautions are needed in regard to the direction of the giving of the school. It is looked upon sometimes by pastors as a convenient way of meeting those outside calls for which they find no place provided in the church offerings. Sometimes a superintendent prefers that the giving of the school should be to other objects than those to which the church contributes. To all such we say: —

Don't pick up for the Sunday-school all the odds and ends of stray causes; don't let the church put off on you all the claims pressed by urgent individuals, and to which the church itself does not care to respond; don't put the bulk of your money into fresh-air funds and flower missions, as though these were of more importance or of more interest than the spread of the good news to grown-ups and children; don't fail to teach them their special responsibility to our own denominational organizations for home and foreign work.

4. **Do not Overdo the Matter.** Don't urge the children to give in proportion to their little means a hundred times more than you would give yourself; don't confuse them with a multiplicity of claims and organizations. It is possible to produce reactions. Lead the children to desire to give from high and intelligent motives, and the disposition will grow with the ability.

CHAPTER XVI.

Concerts, Festivals, and Entertainments.

I. SUNDAY-SCHOOL CONCERTS.

The origin of the Sunday-school Concert was a concert of prayer for the Sunday-school. It was concerted prayer on the part of parents and teachers, not a concert for their entertainment as it has come to be often in our days. There is no special appropriateness in the name when it is an exercise of whatsoever kind of a particular school.

It should not be an exhibition of smart or forward children where they are dressed in party dress and set up to be admired or laughed at. Little Jimmie says his piece in a singsong way: few can understand the words; there is no sentiment in it as rendered, and he goes down with a shrug and a grimace, and all the people laugh. Now and then there is an exception to this; some child does its part in all simplicity, and the effect is sweet and touching. But it is mainly exhibition.

We are almost equally opposed to its being made **an artistic performance** with stage scenery, crosses, and gates ajar — what may properly be called a performance. This appeals to the desire for scenic representation, but cannot be made to rival the theatrical stage, though it may serve in a mild way to cultivate a taste which can only be fully gratified by it.

The Sunday-school concert **should have some relation to the work of the school** — either to its regular studies or

to its history or to special seasons of the year. It should include the same elements which belong to the school. It should be a service of the children, not to them or to their older friends. Its service of song should be a service of worship under the same general limitations which are referred to under the head of Music. Its prayer should be marked by the same devoutness and simplicity. It should have a theme which should guide the selections of Scripture and the addresses, which should have in it the elements of instruction and impression. It should have a purpose, and that should be to aid the school in accomplishing its main object for its regular attendants, and perhaps to make it attractive to those who have not been members of it.

The qualities which should characterize such services are:

1. They should be **Biblical.** The text-book which is the center of the study of the school should be central here. It should be honored and magnified. The selections from it should be made with care. Their intention should be made clear to those who listen to or who join in reading them. The addresses too should be based upon them, and by frequent reference show that its truths guide the thoughts and language of the speakers.

2. They should be **simple.** Everything which has main regard for children should have this quality. It is sufficient to please those who have not been spoiled by too much artificial pleasure. It is far better for them. That which is complex and unnatural tires while it pleases. That which is simple and according to nature rests while it delights. Let us help childhood to keep its simple tastes, and not help educate it away from its naturalness.

3. They should be **varied.** The arrangement should be diversified as much as possible. The same succession of similar things should be avoided. Begin sometimes with a hymn,

sometimes with a prayer, sometimes with an introductory sentence of Scripture. Let the theme teach the order and not habit. Avoid ruts. Make your paths every time if possible. The unexpected, however simple ; the surprise, even of familiar things, always help to keep the interest and sustain the attention of the young.

4. They should be **brief.** Do not plan for too much. Allow a little time for a slower movement through your program than you had counted on. One hour is long enough for any children's service ; an hour and a quarter should be the outside limit. Send them away alert and wide awake. Cut out anything rather than keep them too long. Do not invite some one from abroad to speak to them and have fifty minutes of what are called concert exercises before you call upon him. There is only time then for the few kind words from the pastor, without which such a service is seldom complete ; and if you have a pastor who is able to talk to children, you need not go outside for your main speaker very often.

How often should such services be held? They used to be held monthly by many more schools than now. There are places perhaps where this is not too often. If so frequent as this, there ought to be some connecting plan on which to work through the year, so that there may be something built up by its end — some historical or moral or doctrinal result in knowledge and impulse.

II. FESTIVALS.

Most of our larger schools have come to make their concerts celebrations of the festival days which have come to be observed generally by the churches. These are Christmas, Easter, Children's Sunday, and Thanksgiving, with frequently a commemoration of the anniversary of the school. These five are in most cases enough, and as each has a character and purpose

of its own, there is little danger of monotony. In these the children may have part in the three great festivals of our Christian year, and in two services which are peculiarly their own. There are a great variety of exercises prepared for these services, which may be followed in full or in part, or from which hints may be taken and selections made.

1. **Christmas.** The religious celebration of Christmas should keep clearly before all the birth of Jesus as the Incarnation of God. It is unworthy of a Christian institution that it should have a Christmas entertainment and not a Christmas service — that it should observe the pagan and omit the Christian festival.

2. **Easter** brings its own theme. Coming as it does always on the Lord's day, it has nothing to interfere with its keeping as a day of religious observance. Let it commemorate the Resurrection, the victory of Christ over the grave for himself and for his own.

3. **Thanksgiving,** or the Sunday preceding or following Thanksgiving day, has its own delightful associations. It is often made a harvest festival, with decorations from the garden, the orchard, and the farm; with songs of thanksgiving for the mercies of the year, and with special offerings for the needy ones of the neighborhood.

4. **Children's Day** is of later growth, but has been heartily adopted by the churches and is one of their brightest and best days. Something like it or out of which it has grown had been observed by individual pastors here and there doubtless before any denomination had taken formal action in regard to it. In 1867 the Universalist Convention recommended it as a day for the dedication of children in all the churches. The Methodist General Conference in 1868 recommended "that the second Sunday in June be annually observed as Children's Day, and that in each Sunday-school we attempt

the collection of an average of five cents for each child enrolled." In 1883 the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church designated the same Sunday as Children's Day, "with special services for the children," and "the vital topics of the Christian nurture and the conversion of the young," to "be pressed upon the thought of the entire congregation."

Most denominations have, by official action, requested churches and Sunday-schools, in observing the day, to make an offering for Sunday-school missionary work.

The National Council in 1883 appointed a committee to promote the interests of Congregational churches in Sunday-school work. This Committee addressed a letter to the State Associations, requesting, among other things, that they recommend the observance of the second Sunday in June as Children's Sunday. This action we believe has been taken in all the state bodies of Congregational churches in the United States. A large proportion of the churches now hold special services for children on the second Sunday of June. The National Council in 1886 approved and adopted this action of its committee, and at its later sessions has repeatedly renewed the recommendation, coupled with that of a special contribution to our Sunday-school missionary work. These contributions have steadily increased until they aggregate nearly $20,000. If they averaged five cents for each member, the amount would be fully $33,000.

The usual services include floral decoration of the church, singing and responsive readings by the children, the baptism of infants, presentation of Bibles by the church to baptized children who have reached the age of seven years, a sermon to the children by the pastor, and an offering to the missionary work of our Congregational Sunday-School Society. These exercises, of course, are varied, according to circumstances.

5. **The Sunday-school Anniversary** should of course

be centered about the year's history of the school. Its report of numbers, of changes, and of spiritual gains should be the basis of the addresses to be made. It is a time, too, on the basis of the past record, for new plans and resolves. It ought to be a serious but cheerful service.

As to the hour when these services should be held: we suggest that it should be an hour when all who constitute the school can attend. It seems a great pity to appoint a Sunday-school service in the evening or at an hour when the smaller children, whose interest in it is greater than that of any other class, can not or ought not to attend. It is so too often, but it is because it is regarded as an exhibition addressed to others rather than a service of and for the school.

III. ENTERTAINMENTS.

These are entirely distinct in spirit and purpose from the concerts or festivals of the school. Those should be religious, these are social. Those are for worship and instruction, these are for acquaintance and recreation. They are generally appointed one in the winter and one in the summer.

1. **The summer entertainment** is usually an outdoor affair; an excursion by wagon, rail, or boat, or a picnic nearer home. The nearest object is to give a day of innocent pleasure to the children and to others for whom such occasions may be rare. The remoter purpose is that all may come to know each other better, and that pastor, superintendent, and teachers may show their interest in parents and children, and in all that concerns their pleasure and profit, that so they may be the better able to help them in the best things.

2. **The winter entertainment** is usually connected with Christmas. The religious celebration of the birth of our Lord is probably held on the Sunday nearest the twenty-fifth

of December. The holidays give a good afternoon or evening for an indoor gathering. Here let the same spirit of innocent pleasure and of hearty good-will prevail: let the chief thought be to give pleasure to others rather than to seek it for self. While those who can only receive are made happy, those who give most come to the deepest joy.

As to the details of such gatherings, they must be guided by the place and people.

3. **Instructive Entertainments.** Other gatherings in which instruction and entertainment are blended may add much to the interest and value of a school. Lectures, illustrated if possible by stereopticon, pictures, chart, map, or by objects, may be given on biblical subjects, on foreign or home travel, on various scientific themes, or on the branches of industry in which members of the church or school are engaged. These will serve to bind the school together, to give information on other than religious subjects, and to impress the scholars with the real interest of the officers and teachers in them as shown in these extra-official and voluntary services.

CHAPTER XVII.

Rewards or Recognitions.

How shall fidelity be distinguished? Shall it receive any notice, and what shall the notice be if any is taken of it? This is a question which is seldom thought of except in connection with the larger and best organized schools; and yet it is one which, if a principle is established, may be of consequence to even the smallest.

Shall fidelity be **rewarded?** If by that is intended, Shall it receive some present of money value? we should answer decidedly, "No." While, doubtless, "honesty is the best policy," it is not wise to appeal to that as a motive. Fidelity reaps a large reward in habits, character, and knowledge gained, and these should be the prizes held before the young. We would not belittle them by offering money, books, or even Bibles as a reward.

Recognitions are better than rewards. It is an excellent thing to recognize and to encourage faithfulness by honoring it. By some personal or class badge or banner, by a Roll of Honor on which the names of those who have done well are inscribed, by some mention before the school at the regular sessions or at quarterly reviews or at the Anniversary, a spirit not of emulation but of laudable ambition may be aroused which may do much to promote the prosperity and usefulness of the school.

There are three lines in which faithfulness may properly receive an honorable recognition: —

1. **Attendance.** Everything else will depend on this. There can be no valuable results to the individual and no good influence upon the school without regularity and punctuality in this.

Both the individual and the class may receive this recognition. The scholar or the class present punctually at every session during the quarter may receive some simple badge or be marked by a simple banner. Then at the end of the year those who have been thus marked each quarter may have a certificate for their own permanent keeping which will be prized as the years go by.

In some cases, attendance at one session of the church each Sunday, and in others the bringing of their own Bibles to the school, are added to simple attendance as requirements for such recognition.

In some schools distinction is made between those absolutely in their places every Sunday and those present when not sick or out of town. There should be a very slight distinction, if any, drawn between these two classes, and it should probably be done away with entirely when the absent scholar has written to his teacher explaining the reason for his absence. In such case, his thoughtfulness should be considered quite equal to his bodily presence. He could be marked (L) "present by letter." [1]

2. **Recruiting.** It is certainly an indication of active interest in the school when scholars seek to bring in others to enjoy its benefits. Here some token of approbation may be given to the individual or class bringing in the largest number of new scholars who become regular members of the school. But in this proselyting should be carefully guarded against. Those who have been or are attending other schools should not be counted, and it should be held to be no proof of fidelity,

[1] A Model Superintendent, page 31.

but only of lack of discretion, to endeavor to induce such to change from one to another school.

3. **Scholarship.** This is next in importance to attendance. Indeed this is that for which attendance is important. And yet regularity of attendance has as much to do with the formation of character as the acquiring of even Scripture knowledge.

In the Primary Department a thorough knowledge of the Golden Texts of the quarter should receive some recognition.

In the higher departments a satisfactory passing the oral or written review examination should have a certificate. And the passing from one to another department of the school upon satisfactory evidence of fitness may properly receive a certificate of promotion.

The method. Just how fidelity in these various directions should be marked will depend upon the school, its size and character. **Simplicity** and **inexpensiveness** are important elements in any case. The victors in the Grecian games were content with a wreath of laurel: the honor was in the victory.

Just **how far** these systems of recognition can be introduced into any school will depend upon the superintendent, his sense of order and fitness, and his ability to keep the distinctions clearly before the school.

The principle is recognition, and not reward. The appeal is to the love of approbation, a motive which properly moves all good people through life. No one could easily adopt a full-grown and elaborate system and make it work. Adopt no more in this direction than you can see your way to work; let the machinery be simple and its running smooth.

Mr. Marion Lawrance, of Toledo, Ohio, has probably developed the most complete system of recognitions in use by any superintendent. In his skillful hands they work admirably.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Conventions and Institutes.

It is natural that those engaged in a common and important work should from time to time plan to meet together to compare experiences, to discuss methods, to enjoy fellowship, and to pray for the success of their work. There is advantage, no doubt, in all such gatherings. Some are inspired to new effort and some to new hopefulness in their own home work.

The two forms of gathering named above are probably united in most, if not in all, meetings of Sunday-school teachers and officers. **The distinguishing idea of the convention** is rather the *inspiration* coming from the association of those with the same interests. The special thought of **the institute** is *instruction*, and that particularly (if the derivation of the word has any determining significance) in the principles of Sunday-school teaching. There are few, if any, conventions but have to some extent the institute idea, and no institutes can be held except upon the basis of the convention.

The larger assemblies too, of international, national, state, or county gatherings, take this first and broader name. Doubtless they have their place and function as the gatherings of the leaders and representatives of union interdenominational or denominational Sunday-school work. Of course the larger the assembly and the broader the field from which it is gathered, the less homogeneous it is, and the more general are the discussions which it can profitably maintain.

As this book has regard to the needs of the local school and those who care for it, it is evident that it is the institute to which it naturally calls attention; and **the more local this is the better** it will meet the wants of the locality. The schools of a city or of a conference, or any half dozen or dozen schools which are near neighbors, have many common wants which can be considered in a meeting made up mainly of their own superintendents and teachers. Their difficulties can be considered in the light of their opportunities. Many considerations which are evidently inapplicable to them may be omitted. The whole gathering can take on a more colloquial and personal character than would be possible or profitable in a larger assembly.

It is well to have some **expert superintendent or teacher with them** to instruct, suggest, and reply to questions. With wise guidance from such an one, the more the representatives of these neighboring schools compare notes and make plans among themselves the better.

It is best at such an institute to **consider both aspects of the work,** the subject matter and the method of teaching and administering the school. One line of study should be upon The Book we Teach, the other upon The Way to Teach It.

A superintendents' class. Upon the best methods of conducting the school it is perhaps best to have a **superintendents' institute,** or at least a separate session. The superintendents in attendance at any such local institute could form a class apart, before or after the other meeting, could talk freely together without exposing themselves to the criticisms of their teachers, and could help one another and be helped to the best advantage.

As to **the topics** which may with advantage be considered at such a gathering, they are most of them suggested in the

various chapters and paragraphs of this handbook. As to those which relate to the Bible, they are contained in the various books prepared for normal class use, of which of course only the larger and more general aspects can be treated within the brief limits necessary to such a meeting.

The great good, after all, is a glimpse at things to be studied and thought of later. It gives a bird's-eye view of the much land which is to be possessed only by patient continuance in faithful study. It produces a quickening of the mind and heart for the lifework.

It is a great advantage to those who can attend the **summer assemblies,** which continue in session for a longer time and extend the benefits of the institute into the larger opportunities of the normal class. We should urge any whose leisure would allow it to avail themselves of these; but the great mass of our superintendents and teachers are as far from such advantages as they are from those of a university education, and for them the more limited privileges are the most they can hope, and these even are beyond the reach of many. To such we can only say, Get all the light and help you can and ask the Source of all revealed truth to enable you to receive it and to teach it.

CHAPTER XIX.

Temperance in the Sunday-school.

Two propositions on this subject are of equal importance to be stated and remembered: — (1) That neither the church nor the Sunday-school is or can be a temperance society, in the modern and limited sense in which that word is used. This is not their first and essential object. (2) That every church and Sunday-school is under the highest moral obligation to do all that is in its power to promote the cause and practice of temperance.

First of all, **temperance should be taught in the Sunday-school.** The great principle of self-restraint in all things: moderation in the use of all good things, and abstinence from the use of all things which are bad in themselves and in their general effects. It should be taught from the desk and in the class, as an illustration and as direct divine teaching. It should be taught wisely and honestly. The Scriptures should not be tortured into this service any more than into the support of any other duty or doctrine. Much has been made of **a regular quarterly lesson.** We should much prefer an irregular one, one not labeled with the name, one which should treat of this virtue alongside of others, and give it a place among, and not apart from, other Christian graces. It should be in the minds of both superintendent and teachers as of constant importance, touching a danger which threatens all homes and all society, and a virtue which is essential to Christian character.

Organization. But, beyond the teaching, what? Should there be some kind of organization, which should aim to exert a special influence in this direction?

It follows from the first of these propositions that any action or organization which should be made within **such a body ought to be inclusive** rather than divisive. That is, it ought to take such ground, so broad and Christian and charitable, as not to exclude from coöperation any who are really in sympathy with its great end and purpose. On the other hand, it ought to do what it does so as to unite and concentrate the influence of those who feel some responsibility in this matter, so as to strengthen the weak and stimulate the careless and educate the young. What can be done which will not at once bring to the front all the contrasts of sentiment and theory, but which will yoke together all the possible agreements of feeling and desire?

A plan is suggested which has been used with some measure of success in more than one church. It may include all in both the church and Sunday-school who are willing to coöperate in this way.

The organization is extremely simple and the constitution brief. Three annually elected officers with two others constitute an executive committee. A public meeting to be held quarterly is provided for. The most important article of the Constitution reads thus: —

Our object shall be: — (1) "To give our testimony to the value and manliness of temperance, and of abstinence as the truest temperance in regard to all intoxicating beverages.

(2) "To do what we can to strengthen ourselves in these convictions, and to lead others to them.

(3) "To plant ourselves upon the two principles of Christian conduct, self-denial for the sake of one's own highest good, and self-sacrifice for the good of others.

(4) "And, in all, to point to the grace of God in our Lord Jesus Christ as alone able to keep us from falling, and to establish us in every good word and work."

Abstinence is here declared to be the truest rather than the only temperance, that those might not be driven off who cannot accept a narrower definition.

To avoid the prejudice which many hold against the pledge, especially as offered to the young, both in its absolute promise, the violation of which makes one a liar, and in its perpetually binding force, which mortgages one's future forever (we are only quoting objections which are often made), **a declaration of purpose** was substituted as practically of equal effectiveness for influence and education. It reads thus: —

"We, the undersigned, do hereby express our sense of the evil and danger of the use of alcoholic drinks, and our purpose to abstain from and discountenance the use of all intoxicating beverages."

Signature to this declaration constitutes membership. Many whole families sign it together.

A further provision is this, which is also from the constitution, and which is printed with every card of membership: —

"Members may be **released from their membership** and from their obligations to this union involved in signing the declaration set forth by it, upon making application in writing to the secretary for such release."

This provision would probably call forth special criticism, but in fact it is a permission which, so far as we know, has never been used. Practically it makes the signature always **the declaration of a present purpose,** and not the record of a past promise.

We believe that some organization of this kind, simple and attractive to those of diverse sentiments, may be of service in connection with any church or Sunday-school.

CHAPTER XX.

Conclusion.

We have thus gone over at least some of the particulars necessary to the organization and maintenance of a model Sunday-school. A glance at the history and development of the Sunday-school as we have it; its definition and aim; its relations to home, church, and pastor; its form of organization; its officers, with their qualifications and duties; its conduct in regard to reviews, music, records, literature, charities, festivals, rewards; a few words as to the place and value of institutes, and a suggestion as to the place for temperance work, make up the book.

Doubtless all readers will not agree with all the advice given; some things will seem impracticable and some unwise. We have not intended to claim that all this counsel is good for all. And yet there are none of the courses advised which have not been successfully tried somewhere. They may not fit all cases, but they do fit some. Meanwhile we have set up a model, not to condemn those who have not attained to it, but to stimulate and encourage them. Any workman can build to better advantage if he has some definite ideal in mind, however the practical necessities of the case may prevent him from following it closely. One should not be discouraged because he cannot attain his ideal. He should, however, never be entirely satisfied while it is unreached. Our advice in all points is: **if you cannot have the best, have the best you can.**

There are doubtless many questions which this handbook does not answer, and needs which it cannot meet. That it may have some light to give to those who need it most, at least that it may shed no darkness, and that all who need wisdom may find it from the liberal and unreproving Giver, is the writer's earnest prayer.

It is enough encouragement to study and to toil to remember that "the teachers shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever." [1]

[1] Daniel 12: 3. Margin of Revised Version.

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The Pilgrim Roll of Membership records the names of all the members of the school with such facts regarding each as are of permanent value. The book is large enough to last a school for ten years.

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A simple, practical, and labor-saving system of keeping the records of a Sunday-school should be based on the same principles that govern good bookkeeping in a mercantile house. The work ought not to be done twice by two different people, but, on the other hand, each part of it should be performed by the one who can do it best, and to whom that special portion is of value as a record. The Pilgrim Books are made with the following points in view: —

First — The Teacher should know the *individuals* of his class, and all individual statistics are of value only to the Teacher.

Second — The Secretary needs to know all facts concerning the *classes* of the school, and such statistics of the school as the class statistics combined will furnish. These are of value for he purpose of weekly, monthly, quarterly, and finally and principally, the Annual Report. They are not, however, of permanent value, and when the Annual Report has been made, the Secretary's yearly Record may be laid aside, the permanent portion of it having been incorporated in the Annual Report.

Third — The Roll of Membership is of permanent value and should, therefore, be kept in a separate book (not in the yearly Record), and in connection with the names the facts which have to do with the scholar's history, so far as his connection with the school is concerned, should also be preserved.

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THE EXPLANATORY NOTE

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EXPLANATION. The figures in the horizontal lines of the Library Record, twenty-five on each page, represent library books. In the perpendicular column, under these numbers, are spaces for every Sunday of the year. A number written into one of these spaces records the fact that on that particular Sunday the scholar whose number there appears took the book from the library. And the record thus stands until the return of the book, when a line is drawn through the scholar's number, and the charge to him is thus canceled.

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See also Duryea's Vespers, page vii.

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See also Hubbard's Wheaton Vespers and Easter Service, page v.

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